the weekly Standard

JULY 21, 2008 $4.95

WHAT'S WRONG WITH SELF-INTEREST?
ANDREW FERGUSON

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Federal revenues are already high, yet we stand on the verge of a very large tax increase if the Bush tax cuts expire. The personal income tax burden would rise to its highest point in history, relative to GDP. Economic damage caused by the tax increases and tax-avoidance behavior would choke off any promised revenues (and, more immediately, hobble the eventual economic recovery). Meanwhile, the lure of higher revenues would sustain Congress's wasteful ways. A better idea is to fix entitlements to slow their cost growth, cut nonessential spending, and promote economic growth: the greater the growth, the larger the pie.

— By John F. Cogan and R. Glenn Hubbard

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How to get through to Israel? Let places such as Kashmir, Cyprus, and Tibet lead the way.

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Perhaps the world could impose a big-power "road map" on long-divided Cyprus. Or relieve all displaced populations—the Germans expelled from East Prussia, this Indians uprooted from ancestral homes in what is now Pakistan, the half-million Jews deported from Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria after 1967. Can we promise them all the right to return? Then there's lost territory—much of Azerbaijan taken by Armenia, Tibet swallowed up by China—and artificial states (should Pakistan even exist? North Korea?). Surely the world that solves these problems will have much to teach Israel about humility and concessions.

—Paul R. Gregory

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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The Great Craps vs. Poker Debate

Last week *Time* published an entertaining look at the gambling habits of John McCain and Barack Obama. It seems that McCain is a big-stakes craps player while Obama is a small-stakes poker player. The article's authors clearly have their own ideas about what these proclivities say about the candidates: In their view, McCain is slightly reckless and Obama's cool, calculating, competitiveness is (yet another!) sign of what a very fine commander in chief he will be. The Scrapbook respectfully disagrees. It's not that the metaphor is silly (well, okay, it is), but that *Time* hasn't taken its own metaphor seriously enough.

If the assumption is that a man's choice of gambling reflects his character, then McCain's embrace of the craps table suggests that he's a well-balanced man capable of bridging divides and healing America. Craps is a social game where players win and lose together, where the bonhomie of the table is more important than your chip stack. As Jim Manzi notes, "a craps table is the last bastion of true democracy in America: a diverse group of people working together for a common purpose." McCain's gambling suggests a desire to see a rising tide of hard eights lifting all boats.

Most important, craps is entertainment, and a suitable pastime for a man taking leave of more serious matters. On the other hand, poker (at least when played correctly) is more like work. *Time* seems to put a great deal of stock in Obama's success as a poker player, noting how closely he studied his cards.

But a deeper examination casts some doubt on Obama's poker proclivities. "The stakes were low enough—$1 ante and $3 top raise—to afford a long shot," *Time* reports. "Not Obama. He studied the cards as closely as he would an eleventh-hour amendment to a bill. The odds were religion to him. Only rarely did he bluff."

As our colleague Sonny Bunch notes, this fits poker guru Phil Hellmuth's classification of a "mouse." The mouse is a cautious, conventional player who adheres to a strict, predetermined set of hand requirements. The mouse plays by rote, always backing away from confrontation and rarely losing, or winning, big. Bunch also catches a detail in the *Time* piece about a showdown between Obama and another player, in which they each held four-of-a-kind. The probability of getting four-of-a-kind in a five-card game is 624 in 2,598,960. The probability of two players getting them simultaneously is something like 1 in 1.6 million. Unless, of course, you're playing with wild cards. The Scrapbook absolutely will refrain from pointing out that only girls play acey-deucey.

But the last word on Obama's poker prowess comes from Steve Sailer, who notes *Time*'s reporting that Obama's game was populated by "legislators and lobbyists." Quips Sailer, "[T]hat would have to be just about my number one tip on how to win at gambling: Be a state legislator and play poker against lobbyists." ♦

Obama in Berlin

The Scrapbook was strolling across McPherson Square in downtown Washington the other evening when our eyes fell on a package in the grass. Ordinarily we are chary about packages lying in the lawn of a public park, but something prompted us to bend down and investigate—and are we ever glad we did.

The "package" turned out to be three premium cigars wrapped in some papers, and while our attention was first drawn to the stogies—we won't reveal the brand, but let's just say they weren't cheap—we noticed that the wrapper was, in fact, a memorandum written on Obama '08 letterhead, dated earlier in the week, and addressed from "DA" (campaign guru David Axelrod, perhaps?) to "BO" (not Bob Orben, we're confident).

"Kurt is very excited about your speech in Berlin," it began, "and says that if we can get the Brandenburg Gate venue, the whole damn population will turn out—it'll be even bigger than the Love Parade."

Had The Scrapbook stumbled on a confidential memo from the super-secretive Obama campaign?

He says that a couple of things are very important. First, while standing on the platform before you begin your speech, you need to maintain that eyes-to-the-future look, maybe raising your arms a couple of times to acknowledge the ovations, and smiling modestly.

Second, everybody in the crowd is going to be thinking about JFK through tear-filled eyes, so you've got to say something in German. I know your foreign phrases are restricted to "*Merci beaucoup*" and "*Si, se puede,*" but Kurt has sent along a couple of possibilities that we can work into the text:

Hoffnung und Wechsel—Hope and change

Ich liebe auch David Hasselhoff—I, too, love David Hasselhoff

Ja, wir können—Yes, we can

Wir sind die einzigen die uns selbst helfen können—We are the ones we've been waiting for

Ich bin ein Berliner—I am a jelly doughnut

Können wir uns nicht einfach vertragen?—Can't we all just get along?

Ich bin der Sohn eines Afrikanischen

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of August 5, 2002)

Vaters und einer Amerikanischen Mutter—I am the son of an African father and an American mother

Wir können unterschiedliche Meinungen haben ohne streiten zu müssen—We can disagree without being disagreeable

If this doesn't get you back on the cover of *Newsweek*, nothing will! ♦

Fathers and Sons

The Scrapbook is not ordinarily overflowing with compassion for the Reverend Jesse Jackson, but even our hardened hearts were softened by the open-microphone "scandal" in which Jackson is heard complaining that Barack Obama is "talking down to black people," and that he would like to (as the *Washington Post* delicately explained) "castrate the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee."

Oh, the humanity! Nevertheless, hidden in most press accounts of the "scandal" are some extraordinary words of far greater interest to The Scrapbook: The scorching statement, condemning Jackson's indiscretion, issued by—are you ready for this, psychiatrists?—his son, Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.).

> I'm deeply outraged and disappointed in Reverend Jackson's reckless statements about Senator Barack Obama. His divisive and demeaning comments . . . contradict his inspiring and courageous career . . . Reverend Jackson is my dad and I'll always love him . . . [but] I thoroughly reject and repudiate his ugly rhetoric. He should keep hope alive and any personal attacks and insults to himself.

Ouch! That "keep hope alive" allusion must have pierced the reverend's heart like a stiletto. And yet, throughout American history, how often have sons referred to their fathers in this coldly impersonal manner? Only once, to The Scrapbook's knowledge, when the future president John Quincy Adams, appearing on *Meet the Press* in 1798, was asked about President John Adams's controversial Alien and Sedition Acts. Drawing himself up in his Windsor chair, and shaking his finger vigorously at the camera, the younger Adams seemed to seethe with indignation:

> It is, indeed, indisputable, Sir, that the Chief Magistrate of the United States is my Father, and that I owe to him the same allegiance that any Son would feel incumbent to hold toward his Sire. Yet I cannot refrain from Condemning, in the strongest possible terms at my command, these Insolent and Subversive measures that are loathsome to my Sensibilities and injurious to our Liberties! I can only conclude, Sir, that they reflect Dishonor and Impropriety in the President's understanding of his great Office, and must call into question Mr. Adams' very Judgment and Character.

At which point, *Meet the Press* broke for a commercial, and John Quincy Adams, not realizing that his microphone was still on, muttered to his interlocutor that, "were he not my honor'd Father, I should endeavor to [castrate] the President." ♦

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Casual

Thomas M. Disch, 1940-2008

He sent me a note on July 2, just some jokey line about politics: nothing unusual, nothing portentous, nothing worth a call to see how he was feeling. Two days later, according to the news reports, he sat down in his New York apartment and put a gun to his head—a July 4 suicide, the noise of the shot lost in the crash of the fireworks above the East River.

I can picture it, unfortunately. Those ratty, rundown rooms in which he lived. The pistol he kept in gleeful defiance of the city's gun laws. The prickly brilliance with which he thought himself down into a narrower and narrower trap. The cosseted ill-health and the limp. The endless self-conceit that confirmed even his despair as a great and cosmic thing: an arrogance against the universe, a point of deadly pride. "Here in old age," he grandly announced when I saw him at lunch this spring, "I've finally decided that being a genius is enough for any man, and I'm just going to have to live with it."

He couldn't, of course, because it's not enough: The mad brightness of his arrogance burned against a background blacker than the grave. But the truth is that Tom Disch really was a genius. There was nothing he couldn't do with words. In 1980, he banged out a children's tale called "The Brave Little Toaster: A Bedtime Story for Small Appliances" that became a popular Disney film. In 1987, he penned a screenplay for *Miami Vice*: the weirdest episode of that television program, starring—if I remember correctly—the soul singer James Brown as an extraterrestrial and the gawky young Chris Rock as a hitman, with some inexplicable subplot involving peanut butter.

Just because he was who he was, he got away with things that few other writers have managed. Who else could have written comically lowbrow reviews for *Entertainment Weekly*, deliberately pretentious theater criticism for the *Nation*, wisecracking essays on art for The Weekly Standard, and formal verse for *First Things*?

Disch in 1986

GETTY IMAGES

He was best known for the science fiction he wrote early in his career, from *The Genocides* in 1965 through *On Wings of Song* in 1979. A member of the "New Wave" generation, he helped move science fiction away from its pulp origins, but there was also something dark and off-putting in his work. Only in 1999 did he finally win one of science fiction's Hugo Awards, and that for his nonfiction history of the genre, *The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of*. As the critic John Clute once observed, "Because of his intellectual audacity, the chillingly distant mannerism of his narrative art, the austerity of the pleasures he affords, and the fine cruelty of his wit, Thomas M. Disch has been perhaps the most respected, least trusted, most envied, and least read of all modern first-rank SF writers."

He wanted, however, to be known as a poet, even changing his byline from "Thomas M. Disch" to "Tom Disch" whenever he published his verse. His two volumes of essays about poets and poetry are the most lively of the last twenty years, and his own poetry was at its best in comic applications of fantastically difficult forms.

All in all, it was a fine career—one with which nearly any popular writer would be satisfied. And yet, it seems, in the final analysis, strangely lacking. Or lacking, at least, in the works one would expect from a talent as prodigious as Tom Disch's. He once told me that part of the reason he quit writing science fiction was that, to deepen it into real art, "I would have to be like [the brilliant religious science-fiction author] Gene Wolfe and return to the Catholicism that I barely got away from when I was young—and I can't do that, of course."

Of course. His homosexuality was always unhappy, and his life was always a mess, and he never escaped his escape from Catholicism, if that makes any sense: He never got over the proud feeling that in his unique genius he had broken his chains like Prometheus and was free to do anything.

Whatever such men do, in the end, it cannot be enough. By the time he sat down this summer to kill himself, he seemed to have frittered away most of the money he'd made. A pipe had burst in his farmhouse in upstate New York, and two years later, he told me this spring at lunch, he still hadn't done anything about it: a lifetime of books and papers now abandoned, an inch deep in mold. That's a terrible image to have left for one of the most talented and interesting people of his generation. An image of waste and unbearable sadness.

Joseph Bottum

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Odds of a child becoming a professional golfer: 1 in 140,000

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the weekly Standard

Let's Not Be Provocative!

Asked how the United States ought to respond to last week's Iranian missile tests, Barack Obama told CNN that it was important "we avoid provocation." Just as last year, Obama criticized a Senate bill designating the Iranian Revolutionary Guards a terrorist organization because it was too "provocative." This has us wondering: Is the problem with Iran that the United States seems provocative?

Iran revealed to the world in late 2002 that it had been conducting a secret uranium enrichment program for 15 years. This was a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which Iran is a signatory. Uranium enrichment is the first step on the road to building an atomic bomb. Most everyone seems to agree that Iranian nukes would destabilize the Middle East. What to do?

Obama might not admit it, but for about five years now the Bush administration has followed a course of action rather similar to his preferred policy. Bush has pursued multilateral diplomacy through international institutions (the U.N., the IAEA) and through an ad hoc coalition called the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the U.K., and the United States) in order to induce Iran to suspend its enrichment activities. Obama's policy would be a tad more unilateral, because he would prefer to have direct negotiations with the Iranians and thus remove our allies from the equation altogether.

But does any serious person believe that an offer of direct negotiations without preconditions would change the basic situation? Most reasonable advocates of such talks advocate them just so the United States can say it has "gone the extra mile" in trying to persuade Iran to give up its nuclear program.

Iran has been immune to peaceful persuasion. Since 2006, the Security Council has adopted five resolutions calling on Iran to suspend its enrichment activities and comply fully with the IAEA. And because those resolutions were summarily ignored, the Security Council has also enacted four rounds of punitive sanctions directed at the Iranian regime. No change.

Meanwhile, the P5+1 has made two direct offers to the Iranians, one in June 2006 and the other in June 2008, to lift sanctions and implement security guarantees if Iran "suspends"—not ends—uranium enrichment. As the P5+1 foreign ministers put it in their latest appeal to their Iranian counterpart, "We are ready to work with Iran in order to find a way to address Iran's needs and the international community's concerns, and reiterate that once the confidence of the international community in the exclusively peaceful nature of your nuclear programme is restored, it will be treated in the same manner as that of any Non-Nuclear Weapon State party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty." This isn't exactly what you would call provocative language.

You might call it, instead, a good-faith attempt to resolve an international crisis. But the attempt is failing miserably. Iran has gone right along with its enrichment activities. With each passing day it draws closer to developing the technology and material necessary to construct a nuclear weapon. The latest IAEA report on Iran, released on May 26, stated the obvious: The regime is in continued defiance of the U.N. Security Council, it continues to develop nuclear technology, and it denies international monitors its full cooperation.

The Iranian regime is increasingly confident and bellicose. The president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, openly pines for a world without America and Israel. In 2007, the regime arrested American citizens, holding them in captivity for months, and held 15 British sailors and marines hostage for almost two weeks. Iran is funding, training, and in some cases providing direct assistance to radical Shiite "special groups" killing American soldiers in Iraq. In January of this year, five Iranian ships ran at U.S. naval vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, breaking off moments before the Americans used deadly force. Then last week's missile tests and fiery rhetoric.

And the frontrunner for the presidency of the United States fears his own country may be too "provocative."

Iran has suffered no major consequences from the Bush administration—or anyone else—for its reckless and belligerent actions. Quite the contrary: The more irresponsible Iran's behavior has been, the more entreaties for diplomatic rapprochement it has received. This is dangerous. History shows that conflict is more likely when aggressors feel emboldened, when provocations go unanswered. Only when America reestablishes a credible threat of the use of force might Iran alter its behavior. When it comes to Iran, then, maybe it really is time for a change we can believe in. Maybe it's time the Bush administration—in response to the failure of its current policy—changed from scared-to-provoke doves to scary-to-the-enemy hawks.

—Matthew Continetti, for the Editors

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Self-Interest Is Bad?

Enough with the hectoring.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

JASON SEILER

Oh, terrific. Now we have two of them—two presidential candidates, presumptive nominees of their respective parties, who insist they will not rest until they have inspired all of us stick-in-the-mud Americans to reach celestial heights of personal fulfillment by committing ourselves to a life of service. Service to what? Service to . . . something or other. The phrase that both John McCain and Barack Obama use is a "cause higher than yourself" or "greater than self" or alternatively a "cause greater than your own self-interest." Whatever the precise wording—for now, let's just use an unpronounceable acronym, *CGTYOSI*—we'll be hearing it a lot till November.

McCain grabbed it first, years ago. CGTYOSI appears in his first memoir, *Faith of My Fathers*. In fact, it's the theme of the book, dramatized by the story arc: McCain begins as an impetuous young midshipman resisting the Navy's attempts to "bend [him] to a cause greater than self-interest," and then endures harrowing adversity, rejects the shallowness of his earlier life, and embraces a CGTYOSI. As a candidate, McCain has fastened on the phrase as one of those prefab word-clumps that politicians automatically release when answering a question about this or that. He uses it constantly. "If you've remembered anything I've said," he often tells audiences, "please remember there's nothing nobler than serving a cause greater than your own self-interest." As McCain tells it, that cause is found in AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, and other government agencies that pay people to volunteer. More Americans should have been asked to sign up for those organizations after 9/11, he says. "And as president of the United States in January of 2009, I will ask them to serve again."

Me too, says Obama (as he often does). "When I am president of the United States," he said earlier this month, "I will ask for your service." Both McCain and Obama scold President Bush for not calling Americans to serve a CGTYOSI in the wake of the terrorist attacks in 2001. "After 9/11," says McCain, "I would not have asked Americans to go shopping."

"Instead of a call to service, we were asked to go shopping," Obama points out.

So that's settled: no more shopping next year. But the candidates really are misrepresenting poor President Bush, everyone's punching bag. As far back as 1999, while a presidential candidate, Bush began telling people to serve a CGTYOSI, and he never stopped. He's even said it to Larry King. In an interview days after he was first elected, he told Larry that what he hoped for his daughters above all was that "someday they understand what it means to serve a cause greater than self." And of course he used it after 9/11, over and over again. "We want to be a nation that serves goals greater than self," he said in his 2002 State of the Union, to cite one example. The searchable White House database of presidential pronouncements lists 1,020 uses of the phrase since 2001. That's a lot.

It was inevitable that Obama would cop the phrase—repeating the idea as though it had come to him as a revelation, in front of supporters and journalists who apparently have been hypnotized into believing they've never heard it before. Anyone with a long memory and the patience to listen knows that Obama is truly shameless

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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in this regard. Sometimes his stump speeches sound like a Time-Life greatest-hits compilation of Unforgettable Classic Political Baloney from the '70s, '80s, and '90s, with one cant phrase after another lifted from speeches by Ronald Reagan, Al Gore, Bill Clinton, Elizabeth Dole, John Kerry, Ross Perot, George Bush—yes, I said Elizabeth Dole—Jesse Jackson, Howard Dean, Newt Gingrich, everybody. Like most of those phrases ("choose hope over fear," "we'll take this country back"), CGTYOSI hasn't been fresh for years. It wasn't even fresh 43 years ago, when Lyndon Johnson announced, in his inaugural address, that Americans "want to be part of a common enterprise—a cause greater than themselves." Look where that got us.

On first hearing, I suppose, a politician's call to CGTYOSI seems like a nice idea, something uplifting and public-spirited, a way to unite a diverse population. The more you think about it, though, the creepier the phrase becomes, especially when used as a political tactic.

What's so bad about self-interest, anyway? It's certainly true that Americans pursue their self-interest—and a good thing, too. Both of our presidential candidates are wealthy men—McCain through his marriage to a beer heiress, Obama through royalties from his bestselling books—but neither seems to understand the wellsprings of general prosperity. Democratic capitalism takes the self-interestedness of human beings as a given and corrals it in ways that work to everyone's benefit. Without self-interest, there would be no beer distributorships or liquor stores, no book publishers or bookshops, and both Obama and McCain would be vastly, and literally, poorer for it.

Condescension lies behind the call to a CGTYOSI. Why does a candidate feel compelled to exhort his nation to a higher cause, especially a cause that's purposely left gauzy and undefined? He reveals a low opinion of his countrymen by doing so. He implies a population lost in self-absorption and narcissism, each member ignoring others in pursuit of selfish ends. It takes a lot of nerve to say that, even by insinuation—and since Obama and McCain want to make it personal, let's do.

Earlier this spring, Obama said that in the last year he had spent scarcely any time at his Chicago home, where his wife is trying to rear his young daughters, both under ten years old. He was away from his job in Washington nearly as often, so he could travel around the country cultivating wealthy people who would help finance his run for president. Likewise, for 25 years John McCain has kept his wife and growing children back in Arizona, while he stayed in Washington and, on weekends, traveled to political events, shaking hands, giving speeches, raising money, and otherwise making himself the center of attention. In both cases they do look like men pursuing their self-interest and ignoring causes greater than themselves—the rearing of their children, for example, and the careful attending to their less glamorous professional obligations.

Candidates don't seek office by insulting the voters, of course. It's hard to imagine a candidate running on a promise to Bring Change that a Nation of Slackers and Thumbsuckers Like You Can Believe In. But the implication is there nonetheless, and if the sly insult doesn't offend voters, it's because they think it's directed at everyone but themselves. Very few people believe that they're pursuing selfish ends exclusively, or that they need a big, rhetorical goosing from their elected officials to get up and do the right thing. But with a little persuasion, people can be made to think that *other* people need a goosing. As a campaign tool, the CGTYOSI is a kind of wedge tactic that separates the listener from his fellows through flattery, disguising its divisiveness in a call to unity: *Maybe*, we all think, *President McCain can give all those Americans a good hard talking to and make them stop being so selfish*.

But the main reason people don't think that they themselves are pursuing selfish ends is that they aren't. The creepiest thing about the CGTYOSI as a political tool is this: The politician who uses it doesn't realize that the vast majority of his fellow citizens are already serving causes greater than their self-interest. You could call it "self-interest properly understood," as Tocqueville did, or "reciprocal altruism," as the evolutionary biologists do. We're doing it all the time just the same, and we couldn't get away from it even if we wanted to—and we don't want to.

Whoever wins the White House, the heart sinks to imagine the rhetorical tone of the next administration, thanks to John McCain's regret over his years as a rebellious midshipman and Barack Obama's vanity over the years he spent berating slumlords on the South Side of Chicago. For four long years the rest of us will be hectored about pursuing a cause greater than our self-interest, with the unavoidable implication that as we go through the day getting our kids out of bed, packing their lunches, helping them with homework, dragging ourselves to our jobs, enduring an hour's commute, so we can make enough money to meet our mortgage, attending PTA meetings, feeding the dog, going to church, mowing our neighbor's lawn while he's on vacation, planning a birthday party, saying a prayer for a sick friend, picking up a six-pack for our brother-in-law on the way home, writing a check to the Red Cross, shopping for an old roommate's wedding gift, pretending to listen to the tedious beefs of a co-worker, telephoning an aging aunt, and otherwise doing what it is we need to do to make our lives mean something, we are merely pursuing what our two presidential candidates consider our selfish interest. Because we haven't joined one of their national service programs.

For now, of course, each of the two men, McCain and Obama, points to himself as an exemplar of service—even as he avoids his family, neglects his job, and hands his everyday obligations over to poorly paid subordinates, all so he can fulfill his lifelong ambition of becoming the most powerful and celebrated man in the world. What do you know: They think their self-interest is a cause greater than their self-interest. Funny how that happens. ♦

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The $5.7 Trillion Myth

The Democrats' fuzzy math.

BY STEPHEN MOORE

This week John McCain officially released the details of his economic recovery tax plan. The howls of protest from the left were both loud and predictable. The Obama campaign ripped into the McCain plan with the mantra of "tax cuts for the rich," while leftwing special interest groups claimed that McCain would blow a supersized hole in the budget deficit.

Yes, that bogeyman issue of the budget deficit is back again. That's the issue that's never an issue except when Republicans want to cut taxes, in which case deficits are suddenly one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Never mind that on Nancy Pelosi's watch the budget deficit has more than doubled—to $400 billion—in 18 months. That inconvenient truth hasn't stopped a barrage of attacks from the media and union-funded groups directed at McCain's "$5.7 trillion tax cut plan."

McCain wants to retain the Bush investment tax cuts; repeal the alternative minimum tax; cut the corporate income tax rate to 25 percent from 35 percent, and offer Americans an alternative flat tax (an idea he borrowed from me, by the way). Former Clinton labor secretary Robert Reich calls the McCain tax cut "the most financially irresponsible plan I've seen in years." And even the newspaper I write for, the *Wall Street Journal*, joined in the charge of media skepticism with a headline that read: "McCain Tax Cuts Would Bloat Deficit or Take Huge Spending Curbs."

I'll get to the specifics of why these criticisms are misleading, but let's start with a quick comparison of Senators Obama's and McCain's records on fiscal responsibility. Obama hasn't been in Washington for very long, but in his three years he's firmly entrenched himself among the bottom ten senators on the National Taxpayers Union scorecard of fiscal responsibility. On the same rating scale, McCain ranks as the third-most hostile senator to new spending. In his campaign promises, Obama has proposed $307.2 billion of new spending a year, which is about 40 times larger than the $6.9 billion in new spending that McCain has proposed.

In any plain use of the English language, when tax rates go up, this is a tax increase. Certainly the 80 million or so Americans who own stock will feel their taxes going up. But the Democrats have it wedged in their heads that preserving the current tax laws is a $1.7 trillion tax cut for the rich.

Yet, we're to believe that it's John McCain who's going to pile debt on the backs of our children and Barack Obama who is going to balance the budget. This makes as much sense as picking Rex Grossman over Tom Brady in a fantasy football league.

Then there is the myth that Obama would cut taxes for the middle class, while McCain would only lavish tax cuts on the rich. Bill Clinton also famously touted a middle-class tax cut, and that promise lasted until about the third week of his presidency. The Obama promise to cut taxes on the middle class is an equal farce; it utterly ignores the $1.5 trillion cap and trade energy tax—a tax that (alas) McCain has also endorsed. A study by Laffer Associates found that this would be the biggest increase in taxes on the middle class in decades, and it didn't count the 1 million jobs that would be lost. So if the economic killer cap and trade is enacted (by Obama or McCain), middle-class taxes are going way, way up, not down.

This brings us back to the hullabaloo over the "$5.7 trillion McCain tax plan." This number comes from economist Len Burman of the Brookings Institution and Urban Institute. It is made up out of whole cloth.

About $1.7 trillion of this "cost" comes from making the current tax rates permanent. McCain wants to prevent the 15 percent capital gains and dividend tax rates from rising to 20 percent and 39.6 percent after 2010. In any plain use of the English language, when tax rates go up, this is a tax *increase*. Certainly the 80 million or so Americans who own stock will feel their taxes going up. But the Democrats have it wedged in their heads that preserving current tax laws is a $1.7 trillion tax *cut* for the rich. And these are the people who accuse George Bush of fuzzy math.

Equally deceptive is the Democrats' ever-evolving position on the despised alternative minimum tax (AMT). Some 25 million, mostly middle-class Americans are scheduled to start paying an extra $2,000 a year AMT surcharge in 2009. That would be a giant middle-class wallet buster. So while Barack Obama is pledging to cut taxes on squeezed workers, his colleagues in Congress passed a budget earlier this year that assumes that 25 million middle-class Americans *will* pay the AMT after 2010. This is how they arrived at a "balanced" budget. Meanwhile, McCain, who has pledged

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to protect the middle class from a tax they were never supposed to pay, is accused of handing out a $1.5 trillion "tax cut."

This means that $3.2 trillion of the $5.7 trillion "cost" of the McCain plan is for tax cuts that are either not cuts at all, or tax cuts that Democrats say they favor themselves.

Then there's the other giant flaw in the $5.7 trillion tax cut myth. The models that come up with this number assume that there will be zero change in the economy from lower tax rates. So a roughly one-third reduction in the corporate tax rate translates into a one-third decline in corporate tax receipts. Conversely, a 33 percent increase in the capital gains tax means a 33 percent rise in capital gains receipts. This defies common sense because the reductions in the capital gains tax in 1997 under Bill Clinton and in 2003 under George W. Bush more than doubled capital gains receipts on both occasions.

The same forecasters who say that McCain's tax plan will lose $5.7 trillion also assured us five years ago that the investment tax cuts of 2003 would blow a $1 trillion hole in the budget. Oops. Instead the deficit fell in half from 2003-07 as federal revenues soared by a record $750 billion.

Do economists on the left really believe that the economy's response to a reduction in tax rates is zero? Can it be that moving the U.S. corporate tax rate from the second highest in the world to the international average won't help the competitiveness of U.S.-based firms at all? If that's the case, how does one account for Ireland, which cut its corporate tax rate from 48 percent to 12.5 percent but now has so much economic activity, its tax receipts have soared?

So we have a clash of visions on tax policy here that will be played out on center stage in the months ahead. The left wants a tax system that redistributes $130 billion of the tax burden from the rich to the poor. Good luck to them. Almost every attempt by the Democrats for the past 50 years to increase tax payments by the rich by raising their tax rates has led to the top 1 percent and top 5 percent shouldering smaller shares of overall taxes.

McCain has proposed a tax code redesigned to "increase the growth potential of the economy" by flattening tax rates and keeping taxes low on savings and investment. In the near term, the McCain tax plan will lose revenue, but it's a good bet that in the long run a tax system that increases jobs and growth and incomes will generate more revenues than Obama's priority of putting "fairness" ahead of prosperity. That usually delivers neither. ♦

Caught Between Iraq and a Hard Base

Obama's position has been overtaken by events.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

Back in the heady days of late 2006—when Barack Obama decided on his run for president—Democrats had a foolproof plan to gain power: Use the "disastrous" war in Iraq to split the Republican base off from the center, force Republicans in Congress to desert the president, defund the war effort, and compel withdrawal. Declaring defeat in advance, and even embracing it, they tried to cripple the surge before it started. Nancy Pelosi in the House and Harry Reid in the Senate led a chorus of Democrats who declared the war lost.

Even after the surge began, they hoped that pressure would cause mass defections among Republicans, and pressure was duly poured on. Reid is "lashing out at top commanders while putting the finishing touches on a plan to force a series of votes on Iraq designed exclusively to make Republicans up for reelection in 2008 go on record in favor of continuing an unpopular war," *Politico* reported on June 14, 2007. "By September," Reid hoped, "Republican senators will break with the president."

The left planned an "Iraq Summer," with antiwar groups spending millions on grassroots campaigns. In May 2007, the *Washington Post* reported on plans to spend up to $12 million on demonstrations, phone calls, and ad campaigns to pressure Republican lawmakers. Tom Matzzie, head of the activist pressure group Americans Against Escalation in Iraq, visited the offices of *Politico* to unveil his grandiose plans. "Democrats and the antiwar movement had the GOP 'by the balls,' Matzzie argued. . . . 'We're going to smash their heads against their base, and flush them down the toilet,'" he said. Late in July, Congress adjourned, with Democrats convinced that when they returned in September, Republican lines would be shattered. But the only sound one heard last fall was that of a toilet not flushing.

What happened to change things? The proverbial facts on the ground. At the end of July, longtime Bush critics Kenneth Pollack and Michael O'Hanlon, Democrats allied with a center-left think tank, returned from Iraq having found not chaos but "a war we just might win," as the headline on their *New York Times* op-ed proclaimed. Within weeks, three Democrats who had been to Iraq over the recess also jumped off the antiwar caravan, citing progress sufficient to make them more "flexible"

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when it came to demands for rapid defunding. These were not the defections Harry Reid had planned on.

Though Democrats did their best in advance to discredit the testimony to Congress in early September of Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus (whom they had called to testify months earlier, when they were certain there would be nothing to report but more failure), their measured accounts of modest but marked improvements everywhere in the country checked the course of debate, and then started to change its direction. Public opinion, which had aligned with the Democrats' base at the height of the violence, began to drift back towards the center. A slight uptick in the polls stiffened the spines of beleagured Republicans. The lines held, the rebellion was stymied, and Bush got his way on his war funding measures. "Iraq Summer" turned into the summer that things began to turn around in Iraq.

And so it is that this summer the Democrats and their nominee find themselves caught between an undeniable change in conditions and a dogmatic, intransigent base—in other words, in the very same spot the antiwar left had hoped to put Republicans in. "The politics of Iraq are going to change dramatically in the general election, assuming Iraq continues to show some hopefulness," O'Hanlon told the *New York Times* last November. "If Iraq looks at least partly salvageable, it will be important to explain as a candidate how you would salvage it. . . . The Democrats need to be very careful with what they say, and not hem themselves in."

Boxing their candidate in is, of course, what the Democratic base wants and insists on. So far, the line has been that the surge is a success but the war is a failure—"whipped cream on a pile of fertilizer," as *Time*'s Joe Klein puts it, "a regional policy unprecedented in its stupidity and squalor." But even this hasn't quite caught up with events. Saddam is gone, Al Qaeda in Iraq is on the run, the Sunnis are with us, the Shia are turning against their militias, and the *Washington Post* is suggesting that "Iraq, a country with the world's second largest oil reserves and a strategic linchpin of the Middle East, just might emerge from the last five years of war and turmoil as an American ally, even if its relations with Iran remain warm." In other words, the operation was a failure, but the patient has survived, and is somehow becoming healthier by the day. Seldom has failure appeared quite so good.

"What do the Democrats do if—yes, if, if, if—the surge appears to have succeeded?" Michael Crowley wrote in a *New Republic* blog last November. "If Iraq somehow stabilizes and even incrementally improves, doesn't that affect the

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

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presidential campaign?" Crowley wondered "whether the Democrats have been preparing for that possibility—and what their contingency plans are if the Iraq debate tacks substantially back the GOP's way."

In their innocent way they hadn't prepared in the slightest, which is why they are caught between a public that would rather not lose a war and a base of Bush-hating, antiwar supporters to whom the idea of giving up on losing would feel like the worst loss of all. On the one hand, the former is most of the country; on the other, for the past five years or so all of the zest, oomph, zeal, pizzazz, and certainly most of the cash in the party has come from the latter. The problem was summed up nicely last week in the *Washington Post*, where on Tuesday the more centrist editorial board praised Obama for moving away from the "strident and rigid posture he struck [on Iraq] during the primary campaign," while on Monday the liberal columnist E.J. Dionne had warned Obama he had to stay as strident and rigid as ever, or else he would lose the "high ground" and "dull the enthusiasm (and inhibit the campaign contributions) of the war's staunchest foes." Meanwhile, the netroots are bitching, and Obama's online donations have begun to drop off.

Throughout 2007 and into this year, the Democrats portrayed the surge as Bush's attempt to kick defeat down the road to his successor, but that line, too, has been overtaken by events. Vietnam was seen as lost when Lyndon Johnson handed it off in 1969 to Richard M. Nixon, and Nixon was not blamed for the failure. But Iraq now, by almost every metric, is on the way up. Bush's successor will have to work hard to lose it, and do so against the loud public protests of the troops who have done so much to win it. This is where Obama's prior pronouncements would lead him, and surely he knows it. His base may still want him to lose "Bush's War," but the rest of the country would never forgive him. Or it. ♦

The Enthusiasm Gap, Part II

Conservative voters remain uninspired by the McCain campaign. BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Belleville, Michigan

Standing on a stage at an auto-parts manufacturing facility in this small town west of Detroit, John McCain reacquainted himself with his enthusiasm gap.

Rich Keenan owns the Old Glory Flags and Flagpoles Company in Livonia, Michigan. Wearing jeans and a black buttondown with an American flag embroidered over his left breast, Keenan took the microphone and told McCain that he would not be voting for Barack Obama. But he said: "What I'm trying to do is get to a situation where I'm excited about voting for you."

Keenan was "concerned" about some of McCain's views—he mentioned the opposition to the Bush tax cuts and his views on the environment—and told the senator that he was grateful that McCain had begun taking more conservative positions. "I guess the question I have, and that people like me in this country have, is what can you say to us to make us believe that you actually came to the right position? We want to take you to the dance, we're just concerned about who you're going to go home with."

The audience laughed, and McCain did, too. Then McCain grew serious. "I have to say, and I don't mean to disappoint you, but I haven't changed positions." He defended his vote against the Bush tax cuts and, at some length, reiterated his concerns about global warming. Later, he went out of his way to emphasize his respect for Hillary Clinton and boast about his work with Democrats Joe Lieberman, Russ Feingold, and Ted Kennedy.

This is McCain being McCain. He clearly believes that bipartisanship is among the highest virtues of political life. But it also reflects the campaign's strategic attempt to position McCain as a centrist in order to win the votes of independents and even some Democrats.

There are risks to this strategy and the enthusiasm gap is chief among them. A *Washington Post*/ABC News poll last month found that nearly half of the liberals surveyed are enthusiastic about supporting Barack Obama, while only 13 percent of conservatives are enthusiastic about McCain. More generally, 91 percent of self-identified Obama supporters are "enthusiastic" about their candidate; 54 percent say they are "very enthusiastic." Seventy-three percent of such McCain supporters say they are "enthusiastic" about his candidacy, but only 17 percent say they are "very enthusiastic."

A *USA Today*/Gallup poll reported similar findings last week. That survey shows that while 67 percent of Barack Obama's supporters are "more excited than usual about voting" for their candidate, only 31 percent of John McCain's supporters can say the same thing. More troubling for the McCain campaign is that more than half of those who identified themselves as McCain backers—54 percent—say they are "less excited than usual" about their candidate.

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It is not surprising that conservatives are not warming to a candidate who likes to talk about climate change and government subsidies for displaced workers. But this coldness is increasingly alarming to some McCain backers. They believe that all of McCain's efforts to win over Democrats and independents can only pay off if he is able to get conservatives to turn out to vote for him in November.

Many supporters—both inside and outside of the campaign—believe that McCain has spent relatively little time on his strongest issue: national security. Since the general election began six weeks ago, he has focused largely on energy and the economy. Although his campaign has occasionally sought to provide a contrast with Obama when national security issues are in the news—as it did so well with the Supreme Court decision on detainees and, last week, with the Iranian missile tests—McCain's theme weeks have focused on the economy, energy, and domestic policy. (Last week was "Jobs for America" week, and this is education and opportunity week.)

The campaign's emphasis on these issues is understandable. Polls consistently show that the economy is at the top of voters' concerns. And McCain is trying to convince voters that he gets it, that he understands their circumstances and has a plan to improve them.

But national security issues cannot disappear. His experience here will do more to help McCain with independents than celebrating Hillary Clinton or pushing cap-and-trade. Fewer voters may identify themselves with the Republican party these days, but more still describe themselves as conservative than liberal.

Rich Keenan is one of them. He calls himself an independent and a conservative. He has voted for Republicans but does not consider himself one. "I do think that there are millions of Americans out there like me who are fairly conservative, probably more conservative than John McCain, and I think a lot of them are concerned about what's going to happen if he does get elected."

Keenan says he has "a lot of disagreements" with George W. Bush, but nonetheless thinks "everybody in the country is a hell of a lot safer because he has been president for the last eight years." He says he is surprised that McCain hasn't spent more time talking about that aspect of the Bush record and touting his own national security credentials.

I asked him if he would turn out to vote for McCain in November.

"You know, I really don't know."

McCain himself seems to know that for all of his talk about other issues, many voters will ultimately make their decision based on their understanding of which candidate will keep them safe. And that, more than anything, might get voters like Keenan and other conservatives to a situation where they are excited about voting for him.

At a press conference after the town hall, CNN's Peter Hamby asked McCain about the new findings on the "enthusiasm gap." His answer was revealing.

"Senator, a new *USA Today*/Gallup polls shows that Senator Obama's supporters are considerably more excited about voting for their candidate than are your own supporters. You might have seen it in *USA Today*."

"I'm happy to say I didn't," McCain joked. Then he got serious. "I respect the campaign that Senator Obama has run. He has done a fine job of motivating many, many people. I am confident that as we go through this campaign that I will convince the majority of voters in this country that I am the person to lead this nation through very difficult times. We have—Senator Obama didn't support the surge, wanted to pull out, said that it would fail. I supported it when it was the toughest thing to do. I believe that my record on national security and keeping this country safe is there. And the American people will examine our records and I will win." ♦

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Monkey Business

Spain apes the Declaration of Independence.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

"I am an ape," declared Pedro Pozas, a Spanish animal rights activist, in 2006. The Spanish parliament, which apparently has come to see things Pozas's way, is now poised to endorse the Great Ape Project, granting chimps, bonobos, apes, and orangutans some of the same rights that Jefferson once rooted in the human condition.

The Great Ape Project was launched just 15 years ago by Princeton utilitarian bioethicist Peter Singer and Italian animal rights philosopher Paola Cavalieri with the stated goal of obtaining a United Nations declaration welcoming apes into a "community of equals" with humans. In a kind of parody of the Declaration of Independence, the project's "Declaration on Great Apes" asserts that "all great apes: human beings, chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans" have basic rights including "the right to life," the "protection of individual liberty," and the "prohibition of torture," construed to include "deliberate infliction of severe pain . . . for an alleged benefit to others," clearly aimed at the use of apes in medical research.

But why grant apes rights? After all, if the Spanish parliament deems these animals insufficiently protected, it can enact more stringent protections, as other countries have. But improving the treatment of apes—of which there are few in Spain—is not really the game that is afoot. Rather, as Pozas chortled after the environment committee of the Spanish parliament passed the resolutions committing Spain to the Great Ape Project, this precedent will be the "spear point" that breaks the "species barrier."

And why break the species barrier? Why, to destroy the unique status of man and thus initiate a wholesale transformation of Western civilization.

I have my rights.

BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM

Specifically, by including animals in the "community of equals" and in effect declaring apes to be persons, the Great Ape Project would break the spine of Judeo-Christian moral philosophy, which holds that humans enjoy equal and incalculable moral worth, regardless of our respective capacities, age, and state of health. Once man is demoted to merely another animal in the forest, universal human rights will have to be tossed out and new criteria devised to determine which human/animal lives matter and which individuals can be treated like, well, animals.

Singer and Cavalieri put it this way in the introduction to *The Great Ape Project: Equality Beyond Humanity*, the collection of essays they edited in 1993, with contributions by noted opponents of a human-centric ethics such as primatologist Jane Goodall and Ingrid Newkirk of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals:

> Our request comes at a special moment in history. Never before has our dominion over other animals been so pervasive and systematic. Yet this is also the moment when, within that very Western civilization that has so inexorably extended this dominion, a rational ethic has emerged challenging the moral significance of membership of our own species. This challenge seeks equal consideration for the interests of all animals, human and nonhuman.

Should that come to pass, the *ancien régime* (as they view it) based on the sanctity and equality of human life would crumble. In its place would emerge a society sufficiently hedonistic to eschew moralizing about personal behavior (Singer has defended bestiality), but also humbled to the point where people would willingly sacrifice our own flourishing "for the animals" or to "save the planet" and utilitarian enough to countenance ridding ourselves of unwanted human ballast (Singer is the world's foremost proponent of infanticide). Thus, in the world that would rise from the ashes of human exceptionalism, moral value would be subjective and rights temporary, depending on the extent of each animal's individual capacities at the time of measuring.

Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute and a special consultant to the Center for Bioethics and Culture.

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Most important in the minds of many proponents of the Great Ape Project, religion—above all, orthodox theistic religions that view humankind as at the center of Creation—would be sapped of its remaining vitality. Pozas's spear point is aimed right between the ribs of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, all three of which are loathed by the materialists who have brought the Great Ape Project to the brink of its first triumph.

Thus, no one should be surprised that Richard Dawkins, bitter proselytizer for atheism, has been a strong supporter of the Great Ape Project from its inception. Indeed, in *The Great Ape Project*, Dawkins went so far as to yearn for the discovery or genetic creation of an intermediate species between humans and apes that could interbreed with both. He wrote:

> I can assert without fear of contradiction, that if somebody succeeded in breeding a chimpanzee/human hybrid the news would be earth-shattering. Bishops would bleat, lawyers would gloat in anticipation, conservative politicians would thunder, socialists wouldn't know where to put the barricades. The scientist that achieved the feat would be drummed out of politically correct common-rooms; denounced in pulpit and gutter press; condemned, perhaps, by an Ayatollah's *fatwah*.

Finding such a missing link, however, may prove unnecessary to achieving Dawkins's end. Judges, too many of whom are eager to further the cultural goals of leftist intellectual elites, are already beginning to issue decrees consistent with the thrust of the Great Ape Project. In 2005 a Brazilian trial judge awarded a chimpanzee a writ of habeas corpus. When animal rights activists recently sought a court ruling in Austria granting legal personhood to a chimpanzee, the nation's Supreme Court refused. Not to worry. A few months ago, the European Court of Human Rights—please note, *Human* Rights—agreed to take the case, an ominous sign.

These and other concerted efforts to knock ourselves off the pedestal of exceptionalism are terribly misguided. The way we act is based substantially on what kind of being we perceive ourselves to be. Thus, if we truly want to make this a better and more humane world, the answer is not to think of ourselves as inhabiting the same moral plane as animals—none of which can even begin to comprehend rights. Rather, it is to embrace the unique importance of being human.

After all, if not our humanity, what gives rise to our duty to treat animals properly and to act toward each other in accordance with what is—the Great Ape Project notwithstanding—our exclusive membership in a community of equals? ♦

The Democrats' Popularity Fetish

Global approval is overrated.

BY JAMES KIRCHICK

A major theme of this year's presidential campaign is that the United States has lost the respect of the world and that electing a Democrat, especially Barack Obama, is the way to fix it. "What if we could restore America's place in the world, and people's faith in our government?" asks one Obama ad.

Obama's supposed ability to make the United States loved again is taken as a given by the pundit class, not to mention his adoring followers. Listing his reasons for supporting the junior senator from Illinois, the *Atlantic*'s Andrew Sullivan swooned, "First and foremost: his face. Think of it as the most effective potential re-branding of the United States since Reagan." In a *New York Times* dispatch datelined Paris, foreign affairs columnist Roger Cohen gushed that the French see Obama as one of "*les bons Américains*" alongside John F. Kennedy, Michael Moore, and Al Gore. Writing in the *Baltimore Sun*, University of Maryland professor Thomas Schaller declared that Obama "may yet prove to be America's next great export."

James Kirchick is an assistant editor at the New Republic.

The fervor for Obama here at home appears to be matched by equal, if not more ardent, enthusiasm abroad. "Excitement about Obama spreads around the world," read the headline of a recent Associated Press story, which described the junior senator from Illinois as a "global phenomenon." Yet as tempting as some may find it to support Obama for his worldwide appeal, to believe that his election will dramatically improve America's relations with the world is incredibly shallow.

In the simplistic narrative of the Obama boosters, President Bush and his party's successor, John McCain, are cranky nationalists who view the world through the barrel of a gun. But the fact is, in this election it is the Democratic candidate who is proposing policies profoundly at odds with his promise to restore America's preeminent place in the world.

Take the issue of trade. In Senate debates earlier this year, Obama vocally opposed free trade deals with both South Korea and Colombia. Asked what Congress's failure to pass the Colombia Free Trade Act would mean for bilateral relations between his country and the United States, Colombian president Alvaro Uribe

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replied, "It would be very serious."

But Obama hasn't just opposed free trade pacts with our closest allies in Asia and Latin America. During the Democratic primary, in an attempt to shore up the votes of rust-belt blue-collar workers in states like Ohio and Pennsylvania, he vowed to renegotiate NAFTA, the free trade pact between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. A minor scandal erupted when it was revealed that Obama's chief economic adviser had reassured Canadian officials that his boss's protectionist rhetoric was just campaign sloganeering. After he clinched his party's nomination, Obama tried to confirm that the Canadians' fear was unfounded in an interview with *Fortune* magazine, saying that "sometimes during campaigns the rhetoric gets overheated and amplified."

Given his anti-trade voting record, though, it's hard to know whether to take Obama's latest statements seriously. His easy ability to go from calling NAFTA a "big mistake" to disavowing the comments months later doesn't inspire confidence in his supposedly unshakable principles, never mind his ability to send a positive message to the world that America is open for business.

Indeed, so put off was he by Obama's protectionist rhetoric that British foreign minister David Miliband in May sent Obama an implicit warning to unmoor himself from the agenda of American labor unions. "The problem is not too much trade, the problem is too little trade," he told the *Financial Times*. "That is our position as a British government, and it will be articulated clearly and consistently." Alarmed at Obama's anti-NAFTA rhetoric, Canada's *National Post* opined, "The treaty is simply too integral to our prosperity to take anything about it for granted," and suggested that should the United States even consider renegotiating NAFTA, Canada, America's largest supplier of oil, should threaten to cut off supplies.

Also disconcerting to many around the world is Obama's promise—articulated in a debate last August—to meet with a variety of anti-American dictators without preconditions. He has since tried to backtrack from this off-the-cuff remark, yet its utterance showed Obama's remarkable hubris—his apparent belief that seemingly intractable world problems will be easier to solve simply by dint of his charming personality. He is far from alone in this belief. Writing recently in the *Boston Globe*, Mark Oppenheimer suggested that "given Obama's popularity abroad, it's possible to imagine that his meetings would embolden pro-American or pro-Western forces wherever he went."

For every despot a President Obama meets with, he runs the risk of demoralizing the democracy activists suffering under the despot's boot, and the neighboring countries threatened by said tyrant's hegemony.

Yet negotiating with tin-pot tyrants is a double-edged sword. For every despot a President Obama meets with, he runs the risk of demoralizing the democracy activists suffering under the despot's boot, and the neighboring countries threatened by said tyrant's hegemony. An unconditional meeting with Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, for instance, would rightly anger Colombians, as Chávez's Venezuela has provided assistance to Colombia's antigovernment FARC guerrillas.

Ah, but then there is the Bush foreign policy, Obama partisans argue. It's true that the Iraq war is exhibit A for America haters around the globe, yet it's unclear how Obama's solution—complete withdrawal in little over a year and unconditional negotiations with the Syrians and Iranians—will win us popularity. Leaving Iraq at the pace the Democrats propose would very likely throw the country into chaos, and the people most obviously pleased by this policy would be the Iranians.

Yet let us assume that it is Bush's foreign policy that has earned the evident displeasure with the United States expressed in many countries around the world. Voters desiring to reverse this trend should then give a second look to John McCain, for the Republican's worldwide appeal has been badly underestimated. In March, McCain toured through Europe and the Middle East, and won winning headlines wherever he traveled. The *Guardian*, a newspaper hardly known for its pro-American or pro-Republican sympathies, noted that "Mr. McCain should not be dismissed as Bush mark two" because he is "made of sterner stuff and he has a lifetime of engagement with the outside world—and the scars to prove it—that gives him the moral seriousness Mr. Bush so lacks." And in the past several weeks, McCain has toured Canada, Mexico, and Colombia in an attempt to highlight—to its potential victims abroad—the differences between his pro-trade agenda and the protectionist pandering of his opponent. McCain has distinguished himself from President Bush on a variety of issues—from the closure of Guantánamo to global warming—that are frequently cited in the litany of alleged American misdeeds that Obama will fix.

Ultimately, it remains questionable whether American voters should concern themselves much with "global opinion." In any case, so committed are Obama supporters to the belief that Bush has lowered America's standing to an unprecedented extent that they cannot explain the election of pro-American leaders in Italy (Silvio Berlusconi), Germany (Angela Merkel), and France (Nicolas Sarkozy). Partly because of their candidate's multiethnic background, and partly because of their hatred for Bush, many Obama supporters have a wildly overconfident view of their candidate's powers, one that assumes his emergence onto the world stage will, in the candidate's own phrase, begin to heal the planet. It won't. ♦

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The Colorado Model

The Democrats' plan for turning red states blue

By Fred Barnes

Denver

Last January, a "confidential" memo from a Democratic political consultant outlined an ambitious scheme for spending $11.7 million in Colorado this year to crush Republicans. The money would come from rich liberal donors in the state and would be spent primarily on defeating Senate candidate Bob Schaffer ($5.1 million) and Representative Marilyn Musgrave ($2.6 million), who are loathed by liberals for sponsoring a proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. The overarching aim: Lock in Democratic control of Colorado for years to come.

Leaked memos have a way of revealing who's on top and who's not in politics and which party has energy and momentum. In Colorado, Democrats are third in registered voters (31.2 percent), behind both Independents (34.19 percent) and Republicans (34.14 percent). But in the last two election cycles—2004 and 2006—they've routed Republicans, capturing the governorship, both houses of the state legislature, a U.S. Senate seat, and two U.S. House seats. Democrats are on a roll, and that's not likely to change this year. Republicans are demoralized, disorganized, and more focused on averting further losses in 2008 than on staging a comeback.

The Democratic surge in Colorado reflects the national trend, but it involves a great deal more. There's something unique going on in Colorado that, if copied in other states, has the potential to produce sweeping Democratic gains nationwide. That something is the "Colorado Model," and it's certain to be a major topic of discussion when Democrats convene in Denver in the last week of August for their national convention.

While the Colorado Model isn't a secret, it hasn't drawn much national attention either. Democrats, for now anyway, seem wary of touting it. One reason for their reticence is that it depends partly on wealthy liberals' spending tons of money not only on "independent expenditures" to attack Republican office-seekers but also to create a vast infrastructure of liberal organizations that produces an anti-Republican, anti-conservative echo chamber in politics and the media.

Colorado is where this model is being tested and refined. And Republicans, even more than Democrats, say that it's working impressively. (For Republicans, it offers an excuse for their tailspin.) Jon Caldara, president of the Independence Institute, a conservative think tank based in Denver,

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The Gang of Four

Tim Gill, Rutt Bridges, Jared Polis, and Pat Stryker

GILL, COURTESY OF RAY NG; BRIDGES, AP; POLIS, ROLL CALL; STRYKER, FORT COLLINS COLORADOAN

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says Republicans around the country should be alarmed by the success of the Colorado Model. "Watch out," he says, "it's coming to a state near you."

It probably is. With enough money, its main elements can no doubt be replicated in other states. But a large measure of political shrewdness and opportunism is also required, political traits that have eluded Republicans in Colorado while becoming the hallmark of their opponents. Democrats are wisely running candidates, statewide and locally, who campaign as centrists, not as liberals.

In 2004, in their first offensive against Republicans, the rich liberals worked surreptitiously. They'd been brought together by Al Yates, the former president of Colorado State University, and later were dubbed the "Gang of Four" by the press—or, sarcastically, by Republicans, the "Fab Four." Two of the four, Tim Gill and Rutt Bridges, made millions in computer software. Jared Polis, along with his parents, grew rich from building and selling Internet companies. The fourth, Pat Stryker, is heir to a medical products fortune and runs her family's foundation.

They quietly targeted a handful of Republican state legislators (particularly social conservatives opposed to gay rights), polled to find out what issues might work against them, and promoted their Democratic opponents. Dan Haley, the editorial page editor of the *Denver Post*, told me he realized a clever, new tactic was being pursued when he received a glossy mailer late in the campaign backing a firefighter who was the little-known Democratic challenger of a Republican incumbent. The firefighter had obviously not paid for the expensive piece of campaign literature.

The firefighter lost, but other Democratic challengers won. Republicans were flummoxed, having been caught totally by surprise. For the first time in 44 years, Democrats gained control of both the state senate and house. The Gang of Four had spent an estimated $2 million. In 2006, Gill and Stryker escalated their spending to $7.5 million, and Democrats won the governor's race. "There's nobody on the Republican side putting in that kind of money," says Republican consultant Walt Klein.

As for the 2008 race, that confidential memo, dated January 23, fell into the hands of a Republican activist and was first reported on January 29 by Lynn Bartels of the *Rocky Mountain News*. It had been drafted by Democratic strategist Dominic DelPapa and sent to Al Yates, the guru of the rich liberals. They downplayed its significance, though it memorably declared the plan would "define Schaffer/foot on throat." At the very least the memo showed the magnitude of the effort to drive Republicans deeper into the minority in Colorado.

And that effort draws powerful support from a liberal infrastructure that conservatives aren't close to matching. For years, the Independence Institute, founded in 1985 by John Andrews and headed by Tom Tancredo before he was elected to the U.S. House, stood alone as an influential intellectual and political force in Colorado. (Later Andrews was Republican leader of the Colorado senate.) In 1999, Rutt Bridges started the Bighorn Center for Public Policy, and a year later the Bell Policy Center was created specifically to counter the Independence Institute—prompting the institute's Caldara to quip, the Bell center should be called the Dependence Institute.

That was only the beginning of the buildup. Eric O'Keefe, chairman of the conservative Sam Adams Alliance in Chicago, says there are seven "capacities" that are required to drive a successful political strategy and keep it on offense: the capacity to generate intellectual ammunition, to pursue investigations, to mobilize for elections, to fight media bias, to pursue strategic litigation, to train new leaders, and to sustain a presence in the new media. Colorado liberals have now created institutions that possess all seven capacities. By working together, they generate political noise and attract press coverage. Explains Caldara, "Build an echo chamber and the media laps it up."

First, there are the think tanks such as Bighorn and Bell and supposedly nonpartisan political advocacy groups like the Colorado clone of *MoveOn.org* called *ProgressNowAction.org*, founded in 2005. Another clone, this one a local version of Media Matters known as Colorado Media Matters, was created two years ago to harass journalists and editorial writers who don't push the liberal line.

There's a "public interest" law firm, Colorado Ethics Watch, established in 2006, plus an online newspaper, the *Colorado Independent*, with a team of reporters to ferret out wrongdoing by Republicans, also begun in 2006. And there's a school to train new liberal leaders, the Center for Progressive Leadership Colorado, as well as new media outlets with bloggers and online news and gossip, including *ColoradoPols.com* and *SquareState.net*. That covers all seven capacities. Count them.

It's unclear exactly who is funding these outfits, since they don't have to disclose their donors. But the band of rich liberals are assumed to be the biggest contributors. And that's part of the problem for conservatives and Republicans. They don't have a cadre of what Caldara calls "super spenders" to tap for money, and Republicans have lacked the gumption and foresight to build a comparable conservative infrastructure.

To their distress, Republicans have discovered how skillful the liberal collective is at bedeviling them. It works quite simply. The investigative arm uncovers some alleged wrongdoing by a Republican candidate or official or plays up what someone else has claimed. Then Ethics Watch

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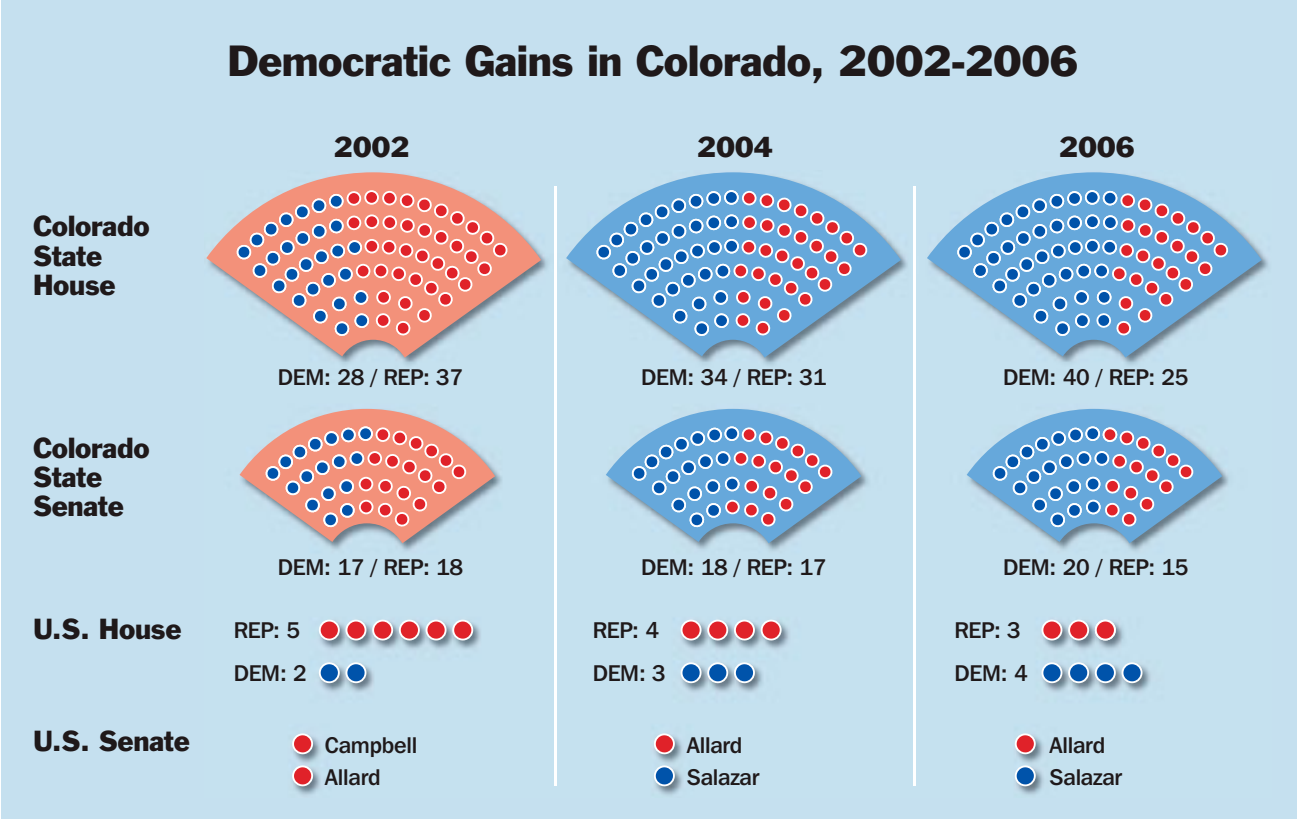

steps in and demands an official investigation, and *ProgressNowAction.org* jumps on the story. This is synergy at work. It spurs political chatter. Finally, the mainstream media are forced to report on it.

Republican secretary of state Mike Coffman was hounded for months by *Colorado Confidential*, now the *Colorado Independent*, for allowing a state employee to run a side business and not reporting a supposed conflict of interest too microscopic to be worth explaining. The mainstream media eventually picked up the story, and Colorado Ethics Watch filed a formal complaint. Later, an official audit found no wrongdoing, but only after Coffman had been publicly pilloried. The episode didn't help his current campaign for a U.S. House seat.

Caldara, too, has been targeted by the liberal groups. He used the phrase "bitch slapped" on his late-night talk radio show. Colorado Media Matters complained, and Caldara says *ProgressNowAction.org* sought to get advertisers to drop his show. "They tried to find a way to Imus me," Caldara says. He's still on the air.

Colorado, for the past half-century anyway, has not been a solidly Republican state. "We're not a very ideological state or a very partisan state," former Republican senator Bill Armstrong says. Colorado voters tilt slightly to the right, though you'd never know it from recent elections. The state was strongly affected by waves of newcomers. Starting in the 1970s, Colorado elected Democrats Gary Hart, Tim Wirth, and Ben Nighthorse Campbell to the Senate, Pat Schroeder to the House, and Democrats to the governor's office for 24 consecutive years. Bill Clinton won the state in the 1992 presidential race. So the notion the current rise of Democrats is a historic, unprecedented breakthrough—that's pure myth.

Republicans rallied in the 1990s when a fresh influx of immigrants from western states arrived. They were more conservative. Highlands Ranch, a town south of Denver, was nicknamed Orange County East because thousands of newcomers from conservative Orange County, California, settled there. After Campbell switched parties in 1995, Republican Wayne Allard won the other Senate seat in 1996, and Republican Bill Owens was elected governor in 1998, giving the GOP all the top statewide offices, four of the six House seats, and the state house and senate.

George W. Bush won Colorado by 9 percentage points in 2000, and Republican control appeared to be firmly entrenched two years later when Owens was reelected over a hapless Democrat opponent, 63 to 34 percent. Championed by *National Review* as America's best governor, Owens was viewed as a logical Republican presidential nominee in 2008. But by 2004, the Republican heyday

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had begun to unravel. Owens and his wife had a highly public separation and later divorced. And Republicans made critical mistakes and squabbled among themselves just as Democrats were uniting.

Two policies helped set the stage for the emergence of the Colorado Model. Term limits, enacted in 1990, forced experienced Republicans out of state office, leaving open seats easier for Democrats to win. And a new campaign finance law limited individual contributions to $400. This allowed independent TV and radio ads and direct mail financed by the Gang of Four to have a disproportionate impact on elections.

On many levels, 2004 was a disastrous year for Republicans in Colorado. Bush's margin of victory was cut in half from 2000. Democrats not only took over the legislature, but a gregarious rancher named John Salazar, a Democrat, won the U.S. House seat west of the Rockies, where Republicans have an overwhelming edge in voter registration. (He was reelected in 2006.) An even bigger blow to Republicans was the U.S. Senate victory by Salazar's younger brother, Ken.

Owens, whose backing was critical, initially endorsed conservative congressman Bob Schaffer for the Senate seat being vacated by Campbell. Schaffer is a likable conservative from northern Colorado who retired from Congress in 2004, honoring his promise to serve only three terms in the House. Then Owens changed his mind and supported beer company chairman Pete Coors, insisting he was the only Republican who could beat Ken Salazar, then state attorney general. Coors defeated Schaffer in the Republican primary, only to run a poor campaign against Salazar.

The bitterness of the Coors-Schaffer race was in contrast with Salazar's undisputed claim on the Democratic nomination. Democratic congressman Mark Udall had announced for the seat the moment Campbell said he would retire. So had Rutt Bridges. But a day later, after a tumultuous 24 hours of negotiations, Udall and Bridges appeared at a press conference to endorse Salazar, who ran as a moderate and an "independent voice" for Colorado. Among Democrats, unity prevailed, and Ken Salazar won.

In 2005, Republicans split over Referendum C, designed to waive the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (known as TABOR) for five years. Passed in 1992, TABOR limited spending hikes to inflation and population growth, required any surplus to be refunded to taxpayers, and mandated a referendum to raise taxes. Conservatives fervently opposed suspending TABOR. But Owens and a handful of Republican leaders joined with Democrats to pass the referendum in order to fund education and transportation initiatives.

Colorado liberals have now created all of the institutions said to be necessary to drive a successful political strategy and keep it on offense. By working together, these 'nonpartisan' policy and political groups and websites generate political noise and attract press coverage. 'Build an echo chamber and the media laps it up,' says Jon Caldara of the Independence Institute in Denver.

Caldara

Things got worse for Republicans in 2006 as the Colorado Model began to take hold. Another bitter primary, this one for governor, pitted congressman Bob Beauprez against Marc Holtzman, the ex-president of the University of Denver. Beauprez won the nomination, but the "Both Ways Bob" label slapped on him by Holtzman stuck, and Democrat Bill Ritter won the governorship in a landslide. Democrats gained legislative seats as well.

Like Salazar, Ritter had gotten the Democratic nomination without a struggle. This was all the more amazing because he ran as a pro-life, pro-business Democrat. Feminists tried to find a pro-choice Democrat to oppose him but failed. Again, unity behind one candidate prevailed.

In 2008, Republicans are still reeling from the string of setbacks and show few signs of recovery. One bit of progress: Schaffer faces no serious opposition for the Republican nomination to hold the Senate seat of Allard, who kept his promise to retire after two terms. Schaffer is already being trashed in TV ads by an environmental group, the League of Conservation Voters, as "Big Oil Bob." Schaffer worked for an energy company after he left Congress.

"The bitterness of Coors-Schaffer in '04 still exists," says John Andrews. "The bitterness of Referendum C persists. And the bitterness of Marc Holtzman versus Bob Beauprez in 2006 persists." Moreover, Andrews says, "I'm not sure our party has learned the lessons it needed to learn. Republicans and conservatives missed our moment to be the next wave of the Reagan revolution at the state level. We didn't

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seize the center, and we didn't seize the imagination of Colorado voters."

That's a remarkable indictment of Republicans by a leading Republican. But it strikes me as a fair assessment. Gill and Stryker, the wealthier half of the Gang of Four, remain determined to drive Marilyn Musgrave out of office after she narrowly won reelection in 2006. Gill, who is gay, is also active in opposing foes of gay rights in other states.

How much they're actually willing to spend against Musgrave and Schaffer is unclear. The leaked memo said a budget of $11.7 million was "little more than our own thinking about what a successful [independent] operation for the presidential, U.S. Senate and [Musgrave] elections might look like." Republicans often trail during the summer before the election, and Schaffer is no exception, running behind Mark Udall in public polls. Barack Obama is a slight favorite to win Colorado in the presidential election. If he does and also wins New Mexico, Democratic consultant Mike Stratton points out, "Obama doesn't need to win Ohio."

Republicans desperately need Schaffer to hold Allard's seat to avert a filibuster-proof Senate in Washington, a Senate in which Republicans can't block or even modify liberal legislation. Schaffer and his campaign manager, Dick Wadhams, insist Udall is vulnerable as a "Boulder liberal" who can't credibly pose as a moderate as Salazar and Ritter did. Neither of them had a voting record. Salazar was state attorney general, Ritter the Denver district attorney. "Udall doesn't have that advantage," Schaffer says. Udall, by the way, lists his residence as Eldorado Springs, not Boulder. Colorado voters tend to view Boulder as a haven for hippies and out of the Colorado mainstream.

Undeterred, Udall is running to the center, saying he plays a bipartisan role in the House. That will be news to House Republicans. "Udall will get to where he needs to be," says Eric Sonderman, a public relations executive in Denver. The question is whether he can effectively respond to Schaffer's call for exploiting Colorado's vast oil shale reserves. Schaffer's position is increasingly popular, and he intends to dwell on it relentlessly. To propose drilling, Udall might have to defy his wife, Maggie Fox, the state director of the Sierra Club, the ardent environmental group. According to a former aide of Bill Armstrong, she has the distinction of being the only person Armstrong ever ordered to leave his Senate office. (Armstrong doesn't recall the incident.)

Absent the Democratic headwind, Schaffer would have a reasonable chance of winning. But his prospects could be further hampered by an antiabortion referendum on the ballot this November declaring that life begins at conception. If abortion becomes a major issue, Schaffer, who is pro-life, might lose the votes of suburban Republican women. "We don't need this," Wadhams says. In recent years, Republican female voters have tended to stray.

Republican hopes of a renaissance rest largely on winning the governor's race in 2010. That won't be easy. For one thing, they lack a candidate. The Republican bench of attractive candidates with statewide recognition is bare. The most prominent ones—Armstrong, Owens, former senator Hank Brown—have retired. Armstrong is president of Colorado Christian University. Aides of Allard have hinted he could be talked into running, but that's a long shot.

In 18 months as governor, Ritter has managed to anger business, labor, and the *Denver Post*, which had promoted him as a candidate. After promising labor leaders he would sign legislation gutting the Labor Peace Act, he bowed to business pressure and vetoed it. The act makes it difficult for unions to organize new workers.

Labor leaders were apoplectic. At the Gridiron Club dinner in Washington a few weeks later, Ritter was confronted aggressively by Teamsters president James Hoffa Jr., who told him "all of labor is upset." Hoffa warned the Democratic convention might "blow up" if other issues were not resolved in a way favorable to labor.

Then, late on a Friday afternoon last November, Ritter issued an executive order permitting state workers to join a union. Organized labor was pleased, but *Denver Post* publisher William Dean Singleton wasn't. He ordered a front-page editorial that criticized Ritter harshly. "This may be the beginning of the end of Ritter as governor," the editorial said. It certainly was the end of Ritter's warm relationship with the newspaper.

For the fall ballot, Ritter is pushing a referendum to impose a $300 million increase in the severance tax on the mining industry, further alienating the business community. He personally called leaders of the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce in the faint hope he could persuade them to back the referendum. The chamber refused.

For all his problems, Ritter will have what Republicans do not have, if he seeks reelection: the full force of the Colorado Model engaged on his behalf. At the same time, his Republican rival is bound to be tormented by the phalanx of liberal groups and targeted by the rich liberals, who are free to spend an unlimited amount of money.

"Colorado is being used as a test bed for a swarm offense by Democrats and liberals to put conservatives and Republicans on defense as much as possible," says Andrews. The initial results of that test are favorable. "The wind's at our back here," says Andrew Romanoff, the Democratic House speaker. The Colorado Model, by nearly all accounts, is working in 2008. And it should continue to be a powerful political force in Colorado (and other states) for many years—that is, until conservatives and Republicans come up with a way to counteract it. ♦

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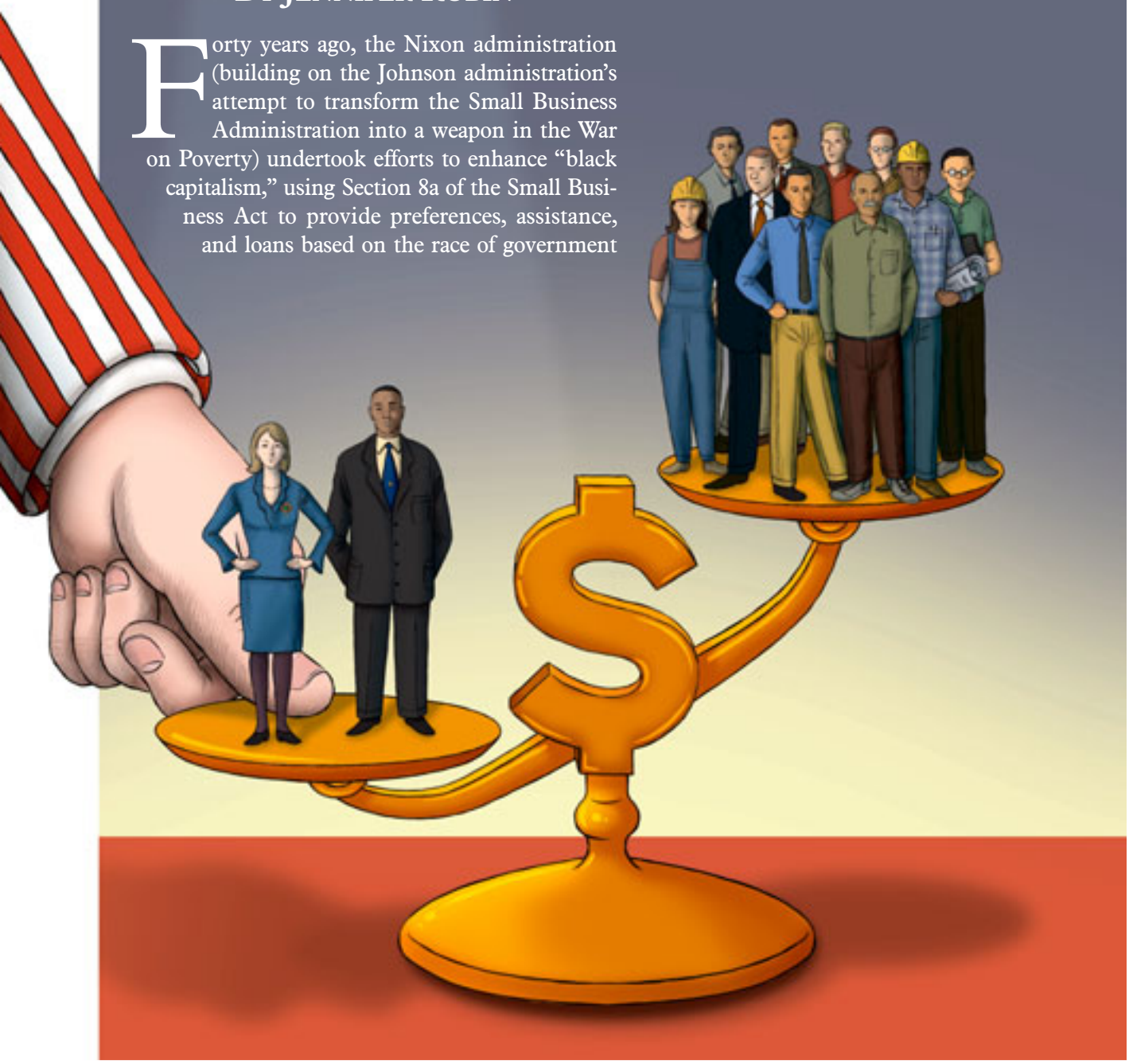
The Quotas That Won't Die

Neither party has the nerve to take on the scandal of preferential set-asides in government contracts.

BY JENNIFER RUBIN

Forty years ago, the Nixon administration (building on the Johnson administration's attempt to transform the Small Business Administration into a weapon in the War on Poverty) undertook efforts to enhance "black capitalism," using Section 8a of the Small Business Act to provide preferences, assistance, and loans based on the race of government



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contractors. Thus was born race- and gender-conscious contracting which would become endemic. From the U.S. State Department to city garbage collection, contracts at all levels of government employ race and gender preferences.

Preferential contracting is a multibillion dollar business. According to a study by Justin Marion of the University of California at Santa Cruz, government contracting is estimated at almost 10 percent of gross domestic product and the practice of giving preferential treatment to disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) contractors and subcontractors is widespread. In 2002, 6.75 percent of federal procurement dollars, for example, were awarded through the Small Business Administration to DBEs. And between 1983 and 1999, all Department of Transportation contracts required 10 percent "goals"—their term of art for set-asides—for minority- and women-owned firms.

The original intent of the DBE programs was to spread work around to a variety of struggling minority business owners, lifting them from poverty to the ranks of the successful. But study after study has shown that a small number of firms, a monopoly of just one or two in some jurisdictions, gets the overwhelming share of the contract awards. Todd Gaziano, a U.S. Civil Rights commissioner, told me, "When you use race as a proxy for disadvantaged [status], the subset that will take advantage are the most educated and the most affluent."

Race-conscious contracting practices are an enormous burden on taxpayers. Marion found that road construction projects in California cost 6 percent less after the overturning of affirmative action by Proposition 209 in 1996. In the two years after racial preferences were eliminated the state saved an estimated $64 million.

The list of the presumed minorities recognized by the Small Business Administration (upon which many government agencies rely) is a monument to racial pieties. Some groups are on the list (e.g., Pakistanis) and some not (e.g., Afghans). The evidence that individuals from Japan, Korea, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines are suffering from discrimination in the United States is virtually nonexistent. "These lists," Gaziano says, "show just how political the determinations are rather than having anything to do with current or even recent discrimination."

Confirming the arbitrary nature of these preferences, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote in the Supreme Court's 1989 decision in *City of Richmond* v. *J.A. Croson Co.*:"There is absolutely no evidence of past discrimination against Spanish-speaking, Oriental, Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut persons in any aspect of the Richmond construction industry. . . . It may well be that Richmond has never had an Aleut or Eskimo citizen. "

In 2007 *Salon* detailed the "often-secretive world of federal contracting, an area of government rife with abuse and poor oversight," and told the sordid tale of an Alaska Eskimo firm receiving a no-bid State Department contract for assistance on Bolivian coca eradication. (Thanks to Senator Ted Stevens's influence, federal no-bid contracts to Eskimo tribes under preferential contracting provisions grew from $180 million in 2000 to $876 million in 2004.) In many of these cases, the politically connected Eskimos displaced other minority firms whose bids were far more competitive.

George LaNoue, professor of political and public policy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, explained in a recent study of minority set-asides that a typical DBE program doesn't concern itself with actual victims of discrimination:

> It does not identify contracts where discrimination occurred. It does not identify firms subjected to discrimination and provide remedies to them. It does not identify prime contractors that discriminate in the selection of subcontractors and sanction them. What it does do is redistribute subcontracting dollars to firms owned at least 51 percent by women or minorities.

If the person in a group "presumed to be disadvantaged" has a net worth of less than $750,000 (*excluding* the value of the person's principal residence and the business) and a construction business with revenues below a set threshold (in the case of the Department of Transportation, $20.41 million in 2007), he or she can gain certification as a DBE. Under this definition 95 percent of Americans might be "disadvantaged" if they started a construction business.

Examining airport contracting, LaNoue found that women, not minorities, were the prime beneficiaries of DBE programs, noting:

> A person may have gone to elite schools, have had very prestigious employment, be selected to prominent positions, and be a member of the best clubs; nevertheless, because of their race or gender they will be presumed by the DBE program to be "socially disadvantaged" as long as they live. Every DBE must be certified by a government agency and must provide considerable data to get certified, but that data do not deal in any detail with whether the owners or the business have ever suffered discrimination.

LaNoue found African-American businesses (the originally intended beneficiaries of DBE programs) received 23.5 percent of the airport contracts (31 percent of the dollars) awarded to DBEs while white women received 48.3 percent (36.5 percent of the dollars).

Ward Connerly, a longtime opponent of preferences and the driving force behind the overturning of affirmative

Jennifer Rubin is a writer in Virginia.

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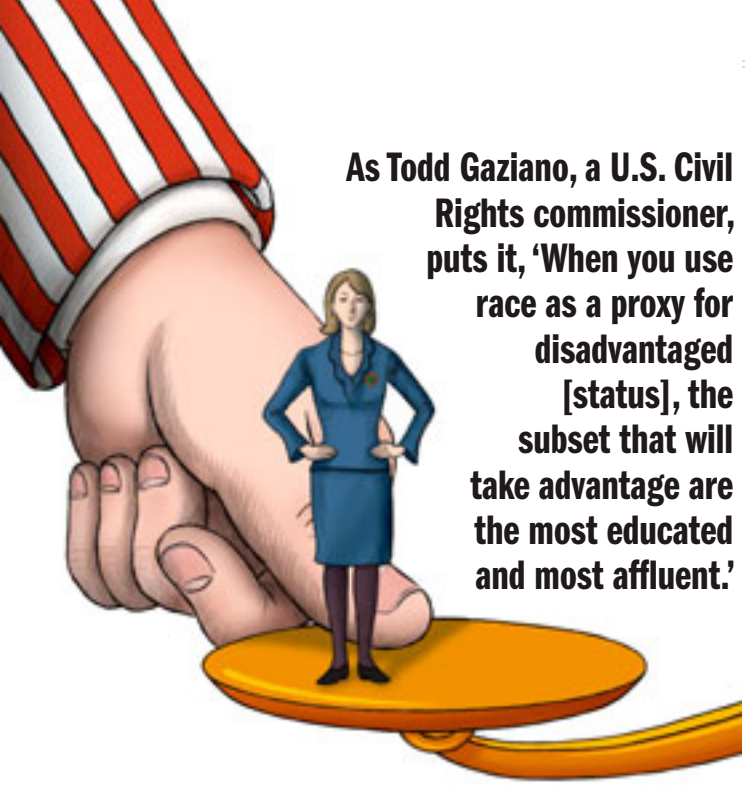

As Todd Gaziano, a U.S. Civil Rights commissioner, puts it, 'When you use race as a proxy for disadvantaged [status], the subset that will take advantage are the most educated and most affluent.'

action in California in 1996, points out that the DBEs' original goal of creating self-sufficient "minority entrepreneurs" has never been met. These DBE businesses who are supposedly being helped, Connerly says, "don't graduate from preferences. They remain beholden to the primes." (DBE contracting programs can either meet their goals through direct bids from prime contracts, or, more frequently, indirectly from prime non-DBE contractors which subcontract out the work to DBEs.) He observes ruefully that we have created a system where "Mexican Americans are given preference over people of Chinese descent on the rationale that 100 years ago white people enslaved black people."

And despite the best efforts of government auditors, no one really knows if these programs work: how much they cost, how successful they are in assisting owners to operate without preferences, or any other meaningful indication of success. In 2001, the GAO reported to Congress that not only could none of these questions be answered, but that the 14 disparity studies which it examined were all analytically flawed.

In 1989, the U.S. Supreme Court intervened to put limits on race-based contracting. The Court in *Richmond* v. *Croson* held that to use preferences state and local governments must pass a "strict scrutiny" test demonstrating a "compelling state interest" in remedying discrimination and must narrowly tailor their programs to reach that goal. Then in *Adarand Constructors, Inc.* v. *Peña* in 1995, the Court held that all racial classifications used by the federal government must also be subject to "strict scrutiny," with the burden of proof on the government to demonstrate that the classification is the least restrictive way of serving a "compelling governmental interest." The Court insisted that race-neutral alternatives be considered.

It would be understandable, if perhaps naïve, to assume that after *Croson* and *Adarand* government entities abolished preference programs that did not meet the strict scrutiny test. Jonathan Bean, a professor of history at Southern Illinois University, has studied the effects of affirmative action programs. He explains that there was "massive resistance across the board" to implementing the Court's edicts. "The proponents of affirmative action have played rope-a-dope for decades." The *Croson* and *Adarand* decisions did not actually abolish race-based contracting. "The Court left the door open," notes Roger Clegg, the president and general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity, "and the government proceeded to drive a truck through it." An entire industry of consultants sprang up to provide studies of racial disparity to justify preferential contracting programs. By the end of 2005, LaNoue found there were almost 200 such disparity studies, which had cost taxpayers an estimated $75 million.

The results are often comical. When KPMG Peat Marwick conducted a disparity study for the city of Miami and proudly announced that there was no evidence of discrimination against blacks or Hispanics, the city commissioners demanded a new study that provided the desired results. These studies, moreover, never provide evidence of discrimination. Although questionnaires are sent out and focus groups convened in an attempt to extract evidence, respondents tend to provide generic opinions on societal discrimination. The findings are, LaNoue notes, simply a "measure of ideology and opinion."

He also found that DBE programs cause more discrimination than they remedy. With regard to the FAA airport contracts, LaNoue's study determined that the programs creating preferences for DBEs did not accurately measure the relative numbers of ready, willing, and able DBE and non-DBE subcontracting. LaNoue concluded: "Under the USDOT regulations, recipients of federal transportation funds are to set goals to create 'the level of DBE participation that would be expected absent discrimination.' . . . As this article shows, the FAA DBE goals process, instead, creates preferences for DBEs and massive overutilization of them as subcontractors."

In September 2005 the U.S. Civil Rights Commission published a study concluding "Ten years after the *Adarand* decision, the Commission has found that federal agencies still largely fail to consider race-neutral alternatives as the Constitution requires":

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> In 1995, *Adarand*'s strict scrutiny requirements compelled agencies to narrowly tailor reliance on race-conscious programs and to seriously consider race-neutral alternatives that would effectively redress discrimination. Ten years later, the agencies in this study have still largely failed to satisfy this requirement. Indeed, no agency reviewed in this report engages in serious consideration of race-neutral alternatives.

Adarand seemed a dead letter. But that same year a major stumbling block was thrown in the way of preferential contracting. In *Western States Paving, Inc.* v. *Washington State Department of Transportation*, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals found the administration of a DBE program failed the strict scrutiny test. The circuit court explained:

> Whether Washington's DBE program is narrowly tailored to further Congress's remedial objective depends upon the presence or absence of discrimination in the State's transportation contracting industry. If no such discrimination is present in Washington, then the State's DBE program does not serve a remedial purpose; it instead provides an unconstitutional windfall to minority contractors solely on the basis of their race or sex.

At least in theory, the decision required that if preferential contracting was to continue within the Ninth Circuit—Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington—localities needed evidence of *actual* discrimination. (Because this decision was limited to the Ninth Circuit, the Justice Department has not enforced the ruling in other states.) Just as they did after *Croson*, the preference professionals revved up the production of disparity studies.

Spokane County in Washington State is a good example of the legal chicanery that ensued. Ed Repp recently retired as the equal employment officer for Spokane County's Public Works Department, which oversees local government contracting. He has documented the shenanigans that characterize race-conscious contracting in a 300-page report. As a result of *Western States Paving*, Washington State's DBE program was invalidated in 2005. But soon new studies were underway, aiming to prove discrimination.

The premise of the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) statistical studies was that any disparities in earnings between various groups proved discrimination. If statistics identified a difference in annual wages between a given group and white men, it was only attributable to "discrimination." Repp noted:

> The utilization study creates an aura of scientific-methodology to rationalize the DBE Program. Its *inferences* of discrimination based on race and sex were then used as the justification for WSDOT's adopted 18.77 percent DBE Goal. The study offers statistical evidence of disparity but no *evidence of discrimination*. It appears to entail "omitted-variable bias" (OVB), in that it omits the independent variable(s) that could explain the disparities.

The WSDOT conducted six focus groups where a consultant tried to extract firsthand evidence of discrimination from groups of contractors and subcontractors who participated in the DBE program. One consultant was quite candid about the goal: "As soon as we get these focus groups done and the write-up, we'll have a new package, send that off to the Federal Highway Administration, and hopefully WSDOT will start setting new goals in the contracts."

In the focus groups, generic expressions of societal discrimination were common:

> PARTICIPANT A: Personally, you know, I don't think I've ever been discriminated against. But you just have to look around to figure out that we live in a society full of discrimination. And if that weren't the case, then you'd see a lot more women and minorities in positions of power and influence, and you don't.
>
> MS. HOLT: Uh-huh.
>
> PARTICIPANT A: Like, it's a no-brainer.
>
> MS. HOLT: You would think, but well, yeah, I mean, you would think. But sometimes we have to convince judges of things that we thought that everybody already knew, which is why we go through this exercise.

Try as they might, the questioners had trouble getting what they were looking for:

> MR. MILLER: Let's put it out there beforehand. There are two ways—or two things that we commonly hear, one is as part of being a small business and the other has to do with the—with the discrimination. And for Colette's report it's—in terms of answering the questions that the court really wanted to find, we want to focus in the beginning with issues related to discrimination. We'll get back to some of the small business issues, but we really want to focus in on what has been your experience. Are you experiencing examples of discrimination?
>
> PARTICIPANT F: How do you define that?
>
> MS. HOLT: Well, it depends. Sometimes it's pretty blatant, like if people spray paint across a truck "No Spics."
>
> PARTICIPANT F: But if you say, okay, here is an engineering firm that's doing work for, you know, all these tribes and entities and they do fantastic, but not one piece of work from WSDOT, how do you want to take that? I don't know.

The participants were sometimes even unwilling to concede that life without preferences was an ordeal:

> MS. HOLT: And then what was your experience? You said that the work dropped off [after the *Western States Paving* ruling]?
>
> PARTICIPANT F: Well, actually, strangely enough, we were afraid that the work was going to drop off, obviously, but actually, it turned out to be one of our biggest growth years. We went from 55 to about 70 that year. But we had—I guess, I would say—that we had, really strategically figured out how we were going to handle it. . . . And then, like I said,

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we had made, you know, a really concerted effort to not just do great work, but establish the client relationships with WSDOT and with our other clients.

And again:

MS. HOLT: A lot of places I hear that the minute the firms graduate, nobody will use them anymore; and then the next year they're back in the program because their sales fell by 75 percent so they get to get back in.

PARTICIPANT D: I actually can't think of an example of a company locally that would meet that story.

PARTICIPANT I: And all the ones that have graduated don't need a job.

A general contractor when asked to confirm that DBE goals are too low gave the questioner an unexpected (if logical) response:

We bend over backwards to help [the DBEs] stay in business. If they really want to be in their business, they would probably make it without the DBE certification. If they really want to be in the business, this would all be part of it. Most of the people that are really successful in the construction industry don't rely on the DBE certificate to make a living. They make it without it.

Rather than finding factual evidence of discrimination against DBEs, Repp found that the "six Focus Group Sessions unintentionally include copious evidence of discrimination against non-DBE firms, or conversely—evidence of preferences for women or minorities, in both construction and design contracting, perpetrated under the DBE Program."

Washington also held eight meetings around the state to try to discern discrimination and satisfy the strict scrutiny standard. But inconveniently for the supporters of the DBE program, a number of attendees complained that the DBE program itself was "discriminatory" and that "it benefits a select few." Repp noted, too, that "The salient finding from these empirical data is that for the twelve months after *Western States Paving*, one firm, North Star Enterprises, received 100 percent of the $463,043.23 awarded to DBE contractors in Spokane County, under seven separate contracts."

North Star Enterprises is a paving firm owned by the daughter (who is white) of the former owner of the largest paving contractor in eastern Washington. North Star was a DBE from 1984 to 2000 when it "graduated" from the program. It was able to recertify in 2003, and, according to Repp, North Star held "a virtual monopoly for the provision of traffic control services in Spokane County and much of Eastern Washington."

Repp concludes that "With about a two to three year hiatus after *Western States Paving*, the DBE Program is being reinstituted in Washington state. And in Eastern Washington, at least, we are back to denying highway work to smaller, struggling non-DBE firms, particularly subcontractors, while providing protection from competition to multimillionaires who are certified DBEs—socially and economically disadvantaged." Programs designed in the 1960s to lift African Americans out of poverty have instead made a white woman in Washington very wealthy.

North Star has once again "graduated" from the program, but a firm run by the owner's husband—using the same equipment, same fax number, and same personnel as North Star—has qualified for DBE status thanks to the ethnic minority rules. He stands ready to inherit the monopoly on DBE contracts in eastern Washington.

Several factors account for the tenacity of preferential-contracting programs despite two Supreme Court rulings against them. First, aggrieved non-DBE-eligible companies are loath to sue the government and offend a hand that might feed them. (When, for example, a contracting association sued the city of Chicago over race-conscious contracting, a number of contractors withdrew from the association out of just such a concern.) They also fear offending well-organized civil rights activists who have the potential to organize pickets, demonstrations, and sophisticated public relations campaigns against a firm. In addition, contractors are already used to all types of government regulations and codes and tend to view affirmative action as just another of the many obstacles in doing business with the government.

On the political front, neither party takes seriously the concept of colorblind government. Conservatives may hold Democrats responsible for these programs, but Republicans have acceded to them for decades in what Connerly claims is their belief that "If you support preference you can hide behind the fig leaf that you are doing the morally right thing. You have cover that you are 'doing the Lord's work.'" Nearly all elected Republicans and Republican candidates for governor and senator opposed the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative in 2006, which easily passed and banned preferences in hiring, contracting, and school admissions in the state. "Too many Republicans think it's just messy," says Todd Gaziano of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. "And it is safer not to rock the boat."

Unless the public loudly demands a colorblind government, we will continue with the one we have—one which uses spurious studies to justify entrenched programs benefiting a select few and which capitulates to the notion that the government is entitled, indeed obligated, to discriminate among its citizens. ♦

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Sigmund Freud (second from left) and his 'Committee' of supporters, Berlin, 1922

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Meetings of the Mind

Freud and his revolution BY LAWRENCE KLEPP

Psychoanalysis is the movement that launched a thousand *New Yorker* cartoons, with a bearded shrink taking notes while the patient (or dog) lying on his couch complains. But it has left us just two memorable jokes. One by the great Viennese satirist Karl Kraus: "Psychoanalysis is itself the disease it purports to cure." And the other attributed to the great Los Angeles philosopher Sam Goldwyn: "Anybody who goes to a psychiatrist should have his head examined."

They're roughly the same paradoxical joke, and like all good jokes, this one has an element of truth in it. Freudian psychoanalysis developed its own fixed ideas and obsessions, its own compulsive rituals, its own endlessly repeated neurotic conflicts marked by paranoia and hysterical fits.

Lawrence Klepp is a writer in New York.

Revolution in Mind
The Creation of Psychoanalysis
by George Makari
Harper, 624 pp., $32.50

George Makari, the director of Cornell's Institute for the History of Psychiatry, has left out the two jokes, but not much else. He's written a detailed, nonpartisan, and often mesmerizing (hypnosis is one of the subplots) account of every labyrinthine turn and Byzantine intrigue of the Central European Freudian movement until Central European political psychosis sent it into exile in the 1930s.

Makari never underestimates the difficulty of exploring the *terra incognita* of the unconscious, and his book leaves you with a basic respect for Sigmund Freud, and for many of his followers and rivals, as intrepid individual thinkers. But Freud's movement kept tripping over its own ambition.

The book is a history of theoretical overreach. It proves, once again, that the most elaborate and irrefutable systems of thought, and the most bitter disputes, are the ones unencumbered by evidence. Makari repeatedly laments the movement's failure to sustain a spirit of free scientific inquiry: "After 1910, the Freudian project narrowed and libido theory hardened into an oath of loyalty. . . . The groundwork had been laid to turn Freud's great synthesis into a monotonous, closed system."

There's no doubt that it had been a great synthesis. Freud took the

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Enlightenment ideal of rationally examining whatever had been the province of religion, in this case the soul, and combined it with the Romantic interest in the night side of human existence: dreams, myths, dark passions, taboos, madness. From 19th-century philosophy he absorbed Schopenhauer's idea of an implacable inner will that carries us along despite our conscious intentions and Nietzsche's brilliantly disorienting psychological aphorisms.

But he was also trying to merge psychology with developments in science, including the concept of energy in physics and the germ theory of disease, in which a single cause could be isolated for every case of certain illnesses. For Freud, looking into mental illnesses, that single cause would be repressed sexual energy.

The idea of an unconscious region of the mind wasn't new. Sophocles and Shakespeare implied it, the German Romantic philosophers speculated about it, Eduard von Hartmann's influential *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869) found most human motivation, including sexual imperatives, to be unconscious. And Freud's mentors, Charcot in Paris and Breuer in Vienna, assumed that unconscious suggestions or memories were at work in hypnotism and hysteria.

But in Freud's developing theory, unconscious impulses were unconscious because they were disturbing and therefore repressed. Nothing was more disturbing to respectable 19th-century minds, nothing led more of a shadowy, unmentionable existence, than sex. Inadmissable sexual desires created mental conflict, Freud concluded, and mental conflict manifested itself as neurosis. And some degree of self-division and self-deception was inevitable, since we can never fully acknowledge our own dark impulses.

"Your problems make my fee seem insignificant."

THE NEW YORKER COLLECTION 2003 / LEO CULLUM FROM CARTOONBANK.COM

"Like Nietzsche and Schopenhauer," Makari acutely remarks, "he believed we must mistake ourselves."

Freudianism itself would mistake itself (for an exact science), but Freud's theoretical investment in sex initially made sense because, as Makari makes clear, he had original ideas about it. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* was a revolutionary book when it appeared in 1905. He dismantled the conventional assumptions that perversions like masochism and fetishism were caused by defective heredity or moral laxity, presenting a theory of a pervasive and amorphous sexual energy, which he called libido. It could attach itself to all sorts of objects, normal or abnormal, depending on both childhood experience and adult circumstance. In the process he scandalously sexualized childhood and proposed that its perverse urges and fantasies were unconsciously retained in adulthood. They could be diverted and sublimated, but relentless repression inflicted grave psychological damage.

There was a clear suggestion that many of Western culture's traditional constraints and taboos were self-defeating, increasing sexual obsessions and vices instead of suppressing them. Freud, mostly ignored by doctors and academics, was first taken up by a younger generation of sex reformers and crusading journalists like Karl Kraus who favored lifting laws against prostitution and homosexuality and conceding to women the same sexual needs and freedom that men claimed.

He was enlisted, somewhat unwillingly (he favored only moderate reform), in what turned out to be the opening salvos of the 20th century's sexual revolution. Despite the stern, paternalistic aura that developed around Freudian analytical protocol, the equation of Freud and sexual permissiveness, propelled by the inner logic of his theory's pansexualism, never went away, least of all in America. Neither did something else, a crude and complacent reductionism.

Kraus and other early allies turned against the Freudians when they started analyzing artists and writers (including Kraus) through their work, reducing every cultural aspiration to a shoddy substitute for sexual gratification. You want to climb the mountain, do you, or paint a picture of it? Ah yes, well, of course we know exactly what *that* means. Freudianism was easily turned into metagossip—scandal without the inconvenience of having to discover any actual scandalous behavior.

Yet Freud's own works usually transcend the narrowness of his libido theory. They're filled with subtle observations about human self-deception and self-sabotage, emotional ambiguities, the way we mistake ourselves and others through displacement and projection, the way "Freudian slips" (or jokes) reveal

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secret wishes, the stubborn persistence of childish irrational or magical thinking in adulthood—in Ernest Gellner's phrase, "the cunning of unreason."

He might easily have settled for a psychological pluralism, giving up on boiler-system sexual determinism in the process. (He eventually gave Eros some company, Thanatos, a dubious aggressive and self-destructive death instinct, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*). But his libido theory evolved into a rigidly schematic set of dogmas, and the only evidence for it consisted of psychiatric couch confessions and free associations that were often prompted by the doctor's hints and theory-driven spin.

Some of Freud's followers began having, like Kraus, second thoughts. At the contentious early "Wednesday Society" meetings of young physicians and intellectuals at Freud's apartment, which began in 1902 at the suggestion of Wilhelm Stekel, everything was up for grabs. It was, as Makari puts it, "a loose confederation of heretics." But in 1908 Stekel was forced to recant after attributing some cases of phobia simply to psychic conflict, not of sexual origins, in the process calling into question Freud's diagnosis of similar cases. Having humiliated him, Freud quietly pocketed some of his ideas, setting a pattern of anathema followed by appropriation that Makari notes in half a dozen cases.

Alfred Adler was more of a threat. His theory, stressing a patient's self-conception and need to overcome feelings of inferiority by achieving a real or illusory sense of superiority, made sex one factor among others. It was, Makari notes, both more coherent and more commonsensical than Freud's. (In fact, it would nicely explain the fierce infighting of the Freudians.)

Freud, who began as a rebel against entrenched orthodoxy, couldn't abide a rebel against his own orthodoxy. "He has created a world system without love," he wrote in a letter, "and I am in the process of carrying out on him the revenge of the offended goddess Libido." In 1911 Adler was forced out of what had become the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, and Stekel and others soon left, too, and went off in their own directions.

Even more momentous was the movement-splintering departure of Freud's Swiss heir apparent, Carl Jung, who was more interested in mixing psychology with myth and religion than leaving it poised on a pleasure principle, and after a long intricate *démarche* with Freud he stepped down as head of the International Psychoanalytical Association in 1913 and went off to start his own therapeutic sect, even more elaborate and esoteric in its conjectures than Freud's. Another eminent Swiss psychologist, Eugen Bleuler, left at the same time, as did dozens of others throughout Europe, all of them arguing that Freud's insistence on psychosexual mechanisms for all problems had become the problem.

Freud, in turn, attributed the dissent of Adler, Jung, Bleuler, and his later heir apparent Otto Rank to their own neuroses. They couldn't see the primacy of sexual dynamics because they themselves had repressed them. The prophecies had become self-fulfilling and the movement self-enclosed. Freudian theory was made impervious to criticism, which only increased the criticism. On the eve of World War I, the movement was, as Makari puts it, "a tangled web of envy, jealousy, paranoia, and ambition . . . the psychologists could not keep themselves from internecine conflict, and worse still, the squabbles seemed scientifically insoluble."

As the Kraus-Goldwyn hypothesis would have it, they needed to have their heads examined. Makari doesn't flinch from the numerous scandals conducted under the thin cover of the doctor-patient bond known as "transference," with analysts seducing their patients or allowing their patients to analyze them (while still paying the fee), or the antics of the "wild" analysts, brilliant but erratic sex radicals like Otto Gross and Wilhelm Reich. But the real scandal was the tendency of the psychoanalytical system to perform acrobatic somersaults over inconvenient clinical findings and land on its feet.

This had been noted early. Makari doesn't mention it, but in 1900, a Vienna Medical Society skit satirically declared: "If the patient loved his mother, it is the reason for this neurosis of his; and if he hated her, it is the reason for the same neurosis." Much later, when Freudians predicted that dependent men would necessarily prefer large-breasted women, some studies were done that showed they actually preferred small-breasted women. Of course, said the Freudians: a resistance formation!

Karl Popper would show that Freudianism, like Marxism, was unscientific because it was unfalsifiable. But much of it was falsified anyway, as research finally cornered Freud's psychosexual shibboleths after World War II. Girls don't suffer from penis envy. Boys aren't possessed by castration anxiety. The Oedipus complex isn't inevitable or crucial. The timing of toilet training doesn't form character. Dreams usually aren't disguised sexual wish fulfillments. Neuropsychology has confirmed some of Freud's basic assumptions about unconscious memories and motivation and conscious inhibition of impulses, but his attempt at a precisely calibrated, deterministic theory of neurosis has fallen apart.

Yet in broad outline—which is all his later books offer, like the anti-utopian *Civilization and Its Discontents* and the antireligious *The Future of an Illusion*—the would-be "conquistador" achieved something like the rearrangement of the map of the human condition he sought: another decisive check to human pride, after Copernicus and Darwin. His books, and depth psychology in general, usefully remind us that rationality is precarious and civilization is always under siege, not just by the savages out there but by a savage part of ourselves. He became, as Auden put it in the poem marking his death in 1939, "a whole climate of opinion." We all speak his language: libido, Ego, Id, repressing, projecting, wishful thinking, split personality, narcissism, etc.

Makari doesn't go as deeply into the history of Freud's ideas and those of his predecessors and rivals as Henri F. Ellenberger did in his magisterial *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970), but he's done something different and equally valuable. He's written a fascinating account of the psychopathology of those ideas' everyday life. ♦

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Rating Updating

Some of our greatest presidents were not so great.

BY ROBERT D. NOVAK

Should Andrew Jackson, founding icon of the Democratic party, be ranked 27th out of 39 rated presidents—below both the discredited philanderer Warren G. Harding and forgotten spoilsman Chester Arthur?

Should the widely memorialized Thomas Jefferson (one of four presidents carved out of Mount Rushmore) be in 14th place—tied with his unpopular old rival John Adams and the even less popular son, John Quincy Adams, and actually below much abused-conservative Republicans William McKinley and Calvin Coolidge?

The Leaders We Deserved (and a Few We Didn't)
Rethinking the Presidential Rating Game
by Alvin S. Felzenberg
Basic Books, 480 pp., $29.95

Should two military heroes typically downgraded in presidential ratings—Zachary Taylor and Ulysses S. Grant—be tied for seventh with the much-praised Harry Truman and fondly remembered John F. Kennedy, one notch below universally celebrated Franklin D. Roosevelt?

Nearly all Americans who claim even a passing interest in their nation's history would answer with a resounding denial. Yet these are carefully reached conclusions, defended in detail by this book, and derived from Al Felzenberg's new rating system that is intended to replace unsubstantiated declarations from the halls of ivy.

Alvin S. Felzenberg is not just some guy seated at the end of the bar, mouthing off about what he thinks he has learned from the History Channel and C-SPAN3. He has been a state and federal government official (most recently spokesman for the 9/11 Commission), congressional staffer, Republican political activist, biographer, essayist, and commentator, with a doctorate in politics from Princeton. But he is not a historian, and *The Leaders We Deserved (and a Few We Didn't)* is, in essence, a rebuttal to academic historians who, until now, have dominated the ratings racket, under the direction of the Arthur M. Schlesingers, *père* and *fils*.

What Felzenberg calls "the presidential ratings game" was started in 1948 by Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr., professor of history at Harvard for 30 years. He asked 55 colleagues to evaluate and rank presidents, and published the results in *Life* magazine. That triggered more than a dozen similar surveys, including another by Schlesinger ("Our Presidents: A Rating by 75 Historians") in the *New York Times Magazine* of July 29, 1962. His more famous son, fellow historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., followed on December 15, 1996, in the *Times Magazine* with his own survey of 32 historians. The Schlesinger surveys ranked presidents in numerical order (omitting, as does Felzenberg, William Henry Harrison and James Garfield, who each served less than a year) and slipped them into categories of "Great," "Near Great," "High Average," "Below Average," and "Failure."

From the start, conservatives complained that the Schlesingers were dealing from a stacked deck of liberal historians recruited as presidential judges. The panel selected by Schlesinger Jr., himself a JFK White House aide, included just one conservative (Forrest McDonald of the University of Alabama), numerous former aides to Democratic officeholders, and two Democratic politicians who were historians only because they wrote about history (Mario Cuomo of New York and Paul Simon of Illinois).

Not surprisingly, the Schlesinger polls downgrade Republicans, with the exception of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Grant is a "Failure" and Coolidge "Below Average." The 1962 survey has Dwight D. Eisenhower ranked 22nd or "Average," defined by Schlesinger Sr. as "mediocre." The subsequent 34 years, when

Schlesinger the Younger

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his presidential papers were opened, were good for Ike on the left, because he climbed to ninth place in 1996. That made him "Above Average," alongside the flawed presidencies of Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. But Ronald Reagan took Eisenhower's place in the lower reaches with a No. 24 ranking, making him "Average," along with George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. The historians forgave the failings of Democratic household gods Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Woodrow Wilson, and Harry Truman to rank each in the top 10 as "Near Great" presidents.

No objective standard can be divined in the historians' rankings except, perhaps, which past president would be booed and which one would

Robert D. Novak is a syndicated columnist in Washington and the author, most recently, of The Prince of Darkness: 50 Years Reporting in Washington.

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be cheered at a Jefferson-Jackson dinner of the Democratic party. It is as if arguments about the all-time ranking of baseball players were not guided by statistics (batting average, number of homers and runs batted in, slugging percentage, etc.).

Felzenberg attempts to remedy this by inventing a numerical rating system, one through five, in each of six categories: "character," "vision," "competence," "economic policy," "preserving and extending liberty," and "defense, national security, and foreign policy." He gives each president from one to five points in each category.

Only Lincoln is six-for-six with a perfect five for 30 points. Felzenberg drops George Washington one point each for "vision" and "economic policy," giving him 28 points for second place. Thus, his point system, with a one-two finish for Abe and George, duplicates the historians' judgment. They also largely agree about who should rank lowest: Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Herbert Hoover, and Richard Nixon.

But their agreement does not extend much farther. Republican Felzenberg tried to rate the presidents objectively, which is more than can be said of the Democratic historians, whom he accuses of "bias." He gives Theodore Roosevelt and Reagan 25 points each, to tie them for third place. The historians did rank TR as "Near Great," but Felzenberg lifted Reagan from mediocre status in the last Schlesinger poll.

The historians rated Franklin Roosevelt as "Great," along with Lincoln and Washington, third in 1962 and tied with Washington for second in 1996. Felzenberg drops FDR to sixth place, contending he "fares less well when his character, experimentation, and human rights practices are considered." Roosevelt's fall, however, is modest compared with what Felzenberg does to other Democratic icons. Jackson and Wilson, top-ten "Near Great" presidents in the historians' view, are rated 27th and 14th respectively, illustrating that this five-point rating system is really just as subjective as the Schlesinger method and cannot be a political version of RBIs or batting averages. It all depends on what the rater thinks is important.

Paradoxically, conservative Republican Felzenberg evaluates through the lens of race as a defining issue for the country, but one the liberal academic historians ignore. Wilson, at heart, was a southern segregationist who fought black rights advocates and sowed the seeds of World War II when he "used his influence at the Paris

Who's on First?

Times change, and historians differ. Here's an easy-to-use guide to the Schlesinger Ratings and the Felzenberg Scale. See how the Generals Taylor (No. 12) and Grant (No. 18) have come up in the world.

President	Schlesinger Sr. (1962)	Schlesinger Jr. (1996)	Felzenberg
1. George Washington	2	2(T)*	2
2. John Adams	10	10	14(T)
3. Thomas Jefferson	5	3	14(T)
4. James Madison	12	16	29(T)
5. James Monroe	18	14	14(T)
6. John Quincy Adams	13	17	14(T)
7. Andrew Jackson	6	4	27(T)
8. Martin Van Buren	17	20	32(T)
9. William Henry Harrison	NR**	NR	NR
10. John Tyler	25	31	34(T)
11. James K. Polk	8	8	20(T)
12. Zachary Taylor	24	28	7(T)
13. Millard Fillmore	26	30	32(T)
14. Franklin Pierce	28	32(T)	37(T)
15. James Buchanan	29	35	39
16. Abraham Lincoln	1	1	1
17. Andrew Johnson	23	34	37(T)
18. Ulysses S. Grant	30	32(T)	7(T)
19. Rutherford B. Hayes	14	22	29(T)
20. James A. Garfield	NR	NR	NR
21. Chester A. Arthur	21	25	24(T)
22. Grover Cleveland	11	12	24(T)
23. Benjamin Harrison	20	18	13
24. Grover Cleveland (2nd term)	11	12	24(T)
25. William McKinley	15	15	7(T)
26. Theodore Roosevelt	7	5	3(T)
27. William Howard Taft	16	21	22(T)
28. Woodrow Wilson	4	6	14(T)
29. Warren G. Harding	31	36	26
30. Calvin Coolidge	27	29	12
31. Herbert Hoover	19	32(T)	34(T)
32. Franklin Delano Roosevelt	3	2(T)	6
33. Harry S. Truman	9	7	7(T)
34. Dwight D. Eisenhower	22	9	5
35. John F. Kennedy		11	7(T)
36. Lyndon B. Johnson		13	27(T)
37. Richard M. Nixon		33	34(T)
38. Gerald Ford		27	20(T)
39. Jimmy Carter		26	29(T)
40. Ronald Reagan		24	3(T)
41. George H.W. Bush		23	14(T)
42. Bill Clinton		19	22(T)

*(T): tie **NR: not rated

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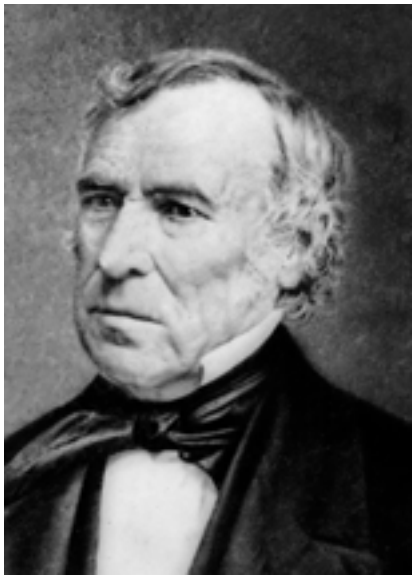
Ulysses S. Grant



Zachary Taylor

Peace Conference to block a Japanese-initiated amendment on racial equality." Jackson was a racist, an unapologetic champion of slavery and brutal persecutor of Indians who always expressed pride in his forced relocation of Native Americans beyond the Mississippi River. That included the infamous Trail of Tears, where "about a quarter of the Cherokee nation perished enroute"—ignored by Schlesinger Jr. in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Age of Jackson*.

Race is the overriding reason James K. Polk, Jackson's protégé who was rated eighth and "Near Great" in the Schlesinger surveys, is 20th on Felzenberg's list. While he is given a five out of five in "competence," he gets only a one in "character" and a two in "preserving and extending liberty" because of his massive expansion of American territory through the Mexican War. Felzenberg sees Polk's policies as crafted to benefit slaveholders: "Polk's vision for his country proved harmful over time, igniting the fuse that would set off the Civil War."

Felzenberg's racial focus also explains his unexpectedly high ratings—especially 23 points for Zachary Taylor, considered mediocre by the historians, to tie him for seventh place. If he had not died in his second year as president, Felzenberg writes, "Taylor might have been able to draw upon his personal standing to bring to the fore sufficient numbers of Southern moderates to hold the 'fire-eaters' at bay." He contends that Taylor "might well have killed secessionist agitation in the cradle."

The Felzenberg rating system also gives 23 points to the maligned Grant, contending that he was trashed by reformers who neglect to praise his reversal of Andrew Johnson's racist policies. Grant was the last president to send federal troops south to enforce the law for African Americans until Eisenhower did so in 1957.

"So let the game begin," Felzenberg tells readers as he begins rating presidents, indicating he does not take his new rating as seriously as academic historians regard their Olympian pronouncements. He implies nobody needs a Ph.D. in history (or in politics) to play this game, and I—with just a bachelor's degree in English—will give it a try.

I would reverse the rating system's evaluation of Jefferson (tied for 14th) and Theodore Roosevelt (tied for third with Reagan), opposites who are forever joined on Mount Rushmore. (TR considered Jefferson one of the worst presidents, and the insult surely would have been returned by Jefferson if he had known TR.) Felzenberg undervalues Jefferson's bold purchase of the Louisiana Territory, his opposition to the noxious Alien and Sedition Acts (approved and enforced by John Adams), and his suspicion of an overreaching federal government. Roosevelt's legacy includes gunboat diplomacy, the first federal police force, interference with markets, and advocacy of big government.

I disagree with Felzenberg keeping both Franklin Roosevelt and Truman in the historians' top-ten stratosphere. I would drop each into the middle range of presidents at best. FDR's performance on human rights for American blacks, Japanese Americans, and Hitler's Jewish refugees was abysmal, his high-tax economic policy unnecessarily extended the Great Depression, his handling of intelligence about Japan led to the Pearl Harbor disaster, he betrayed Poland at Yalta, and this book deplores "the inattention and lack of concern Roosevelt paid to warnings that Stalin ordered agents to infiltrate the highest reaches of the American government."

Similarly, Truman sloughed off communications intelligence about Soviet espionage. Felzenberg does not mention that, or Truman's deplorable performance as commander in chief during the last two years of the Korean War. Felzenberg lifts Coolidge to 12th from 29th in the historians, but I would make him a top ten president by raising the very low marks in "defense, national security and foreign policy."

On his way to the ratings, Felzenberg delivers a rollicking 377-page survey of American history, replete with surprises. Unfortunately, he defers a verdict on the unfinished tenure of George W. Bush. But I will, using the rating system of *The Leaders We Deserved*: Three for "character," two for "vision," one for "competence," four for "economic policy," one for "preserving and extending liberty," and two for "defense, national security and foreign policy." That's 15 points, which would tie him for 22nd place with William Howard Taft and Clinton in this book's tally—not very good, but predictably better than Schlesinger's historians would give him.

We'll have to wait for the paperback edition to see what Al Felzenberg thinks. ♦

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How Teachers Learn

Some unexpected lessons. **BY CHARLES SAHM**

"You are quite evidently deranged."

That is what the founder of Teach for America (TFA), Wendy Kopp, was told when she first asked her Princeton adviser for permission to use her senior thesis to develop an idea for a national teaching corps that would put America's brightest college graduates in classrooms teaching America's lowest-performing students. Fortunately, Wendy Kopp is as stubborn as she is smart, and she not only wrote her thesis but, since her 1989 graduation, has worked tirelessly to turn her idea into reality.

Relentless Pursuit
A Year in the Trenches with Teach for America
by Donna Foote
Knopf, 352 pp., $24.95

Today, Teach for America has over 5,000 active "corps members" who are teaching 440,000 students in hundreds of America's toughest public schools. And TFA has become one of the most selective and sought-after post-graduation programs: Twelve percent of Yale's class of 2005 applied to become TFA teachers; only a handful were selected.

Perhaps most important, many of TFA's 20,000 alumni are now at the forefront of the burgeoning education reform movement. TFA alums are fueling what the *Washington Post* calls the "TFA insurgency" by starting successful charter schools, such as the growing KIPP Academy network, and assuming leadership positions in school systems across the country, including the District of Columbia, where Michelle Rhee, a TFA alum, was appointed chancellor last year.

In *Relentless Pursuit*, Donna Foote follows a group of TFA corps members for the entire 2005-06 school year as they take on the difficult assignment of teaching at the 3,100-student Locke High School in the Watts neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles. Opened in 1967, two years after the Watts riots, Locke High School was supposed to lead the community's revival; but after some early success, the school soon began to mirror the dysfunction of the community that surrounds it. Only 24 percent of the ninth graders who entered Locke in 2001 graduated in 2005, and only 3 percent completed the course requirements for admission to California's public university system.

Relentless Pursuit is filled with both the depressing and inspiring stories that one might expect. Most disturbing is the senseless gang violence. It is estimated that a dozen Locke students or Locke dropouts died violent deaths during the school year. But there are also moments of great triumph, such as when the girls' soccer team (coached by a TFA teacher) wins the division title. Especially uplifting is the story of a TFA English teacher, Taylor Rifkin, whose students not only increase their reading scores by an *average* of three grade levels in one year but also come to love Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

What makes this volume noteworthy is the fact that Foote looks at both Locke and TFA with the jaundiced eye of a veteran journalist. She does not glorify the TFA teachers: They are all initially overwhelmed by the challenge of teaching at Locke, and one quits just weeks into the first semester. Nor does she condescend to treat Locke students as helpless victims of a racist society, as Jonathan Kozol does in his numerous books. In fact, Foote is often quite tough on the Locke students and frequently questions why they don't seize the educational opportunities being offered to them and escape the cycle of poverty in Watts.

The last few chapters are especially fascinating for policy enthusiasts as they offer a hopeful look at the changes taking place in public education. TFA teachers at Locke launched a special "academy" within the larger school that was showing promising results. An important component of the academy was an extra period that allowed teachers to spend time with students in subjects where they needed extra help. The TFA teachers persuaded Locke's principal to call a teachers' meeting to discuss making the extra period a schoolwide reform.

When the TFA teachers made impassioned pleas to their colleagues regarding the need for more class time, the teachers' union rep coldly retorted: "If you guys want to work 20 percent more, and not get paid 20 percent more, then vote for seven periods." The teachers voted down the proposal to extend the school day by a 72-to-36 vote. (Interestingly, Locke students supported the idea of a longer school day.)

But the story does not end there. After the 2005-06 school year, several TFA teachers left Locke to start two nearby "Green Dot" charter schools where bureaucracy and union work rules would not be an impediment to student achievement. These schools immediately proved so successful that Locke's principal, Frank Wells, saw the light and decided to join forces with Green Dot. After a protracted struggle with the union, Wells was able to convince a majority of Locke's tenured teachers to sign a petition that would allow the school to convert to charter status. Last year the Gates Foundation provided $8 million to fund Locke's transformation into 10 small Green Dot charter schools, and the new Green Dot Locke campus opened its doors last September—minus 22 incompetent teachers Wells had long sought to get rid of. ♦

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In Search of Trumbo

You won't find him in 'The Movie.' BY RONALD RADOSH

Dalton Trumbo, 1947

BETTMANN / CORBIS

The late director Billy Wilder, referring to the "Unfriendly Ten"—later called the Hollywood Ten, who refused to answer questions from the House Un-American Activities Committee in its 1950 investigation of Hollywood communism—joked that "only two were talented. The rest were just unfriendly."

One of those two was Dalton Trumbo, arguably the most talented, witty, and sharpest of the writers blacklisted by Hollywood in the 1950s and '60s. Any audience listening to Trumbo's words, read by such well-known actors as Joan Allen, Michael Douglas, Paul Giamatti, Nathan Lane, Liam Neeson, and David Strathairn, among others, will find much evidence of Trumbo's brilliance.

But what they will *not* find in *Trumbo: The Movie*, directed by Peter Askin and based on a play by the writer's son Christopher, is an accurate depiction of the personal complexity, private doubts, and life of Dalton Trumbo, who was a devoted Hollywood Communist from the late 1930s through the early '50s. Instead, they will find a repetition of the all-too-familiar narrative about the Hollywood Reds: innocent victims persecuted for their ideas by reactionary, attention-grabbing congressmen. Devoted first and foremost to defense of the First Amendment and the nation's civil liberties, and under attack from McCarthyites, they and Trumbo fought the worst villains of all: the "friendly" ex-Communist writers and actors who did testify and sold their souls for the right to continue working by informing against their old comrades and exposing them as once having been Reds. Thus *Trumbo*, writes the *New York Times*, just might "finally put to rest the hunt for good guys and bad."

No, it won't.

The film's opening sequence, where David Strathairn reads excerpts from Trumbo's famous 1970 "only victims" speech before the Writers Guild in Hollywood, raises expectations that it might offer something more interesting than the usual narrative. At the time, Trumbo proclaimed that "it will do no good to search for villains or heroes or saints or devils because there were none. There were only victims." Indeed, he came to the conclusion that there was "good and bad on both sides." All of them, Trumbo reflected, "without exception . . . felt compelled to say things he did not want to say, to do things he did not want to do . . . none of us—right, left or center—emerged from that long nightmare without sin."

The speech, widely attacked at the time by the left, was the wisest public statement Trumbo ever made.

These generous sentiments, however, are quickly dispensed with, and the film returns to familiar ground. Such is the case with a 1956 letter, featured in the movie, where Trumbo wrote to fellow writer Guy Endore that one who informs "on friends who have harmed no one, and who thereafter earns money he could not have earned before, . . . [is] not a decent citizen, not a patriot, but a miserable scoundrel who will . . . if the price is right, betray not just his friends but his country itself." As for himself, he told Endore that he would only "re-enter motion pictures when it becomes possible for Communists to re-enter them."

Conveniently missing from the film is what Endore wrote back to Trumbo. So many years before Trumbo's own 1970 *mea culpa*, Endore answered that he, unlike Trumbo, did not hold an "implacable hatred" toward the friendly witnesses: He had even lunched publicly with a so-called informer because "if I held to the proposition that if I was against the blacklist . . . I should also be against all forms of blacklist." Moreover, he told Trumbo, he could not be proud of their political activity, such as when they undertook to defend Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the atomic spies.

"World attention," he said, "concentrated on the Rosenberg trial [and] missed the horror of the Prague trials. . . . Was that the purpose of the Communist move into the Rosenberg case?" He was no longer willing to be used "as a decoy, a smoke-screen" by those who had secret motives. "And brother," he concluded to Trumbo, "we've been played."

Ronald Radosh, adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute, is the coauthor, with Allis Radosh, of Red Star Over Hollywood.

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As for defense of the First Amendment—which, we are repeatedly told, was Trumbo's great cause—the film ignores an example that proves this to be a lie. There is a lengthy sequence in which Donald Sutherland reads from Trumbo's 1939 antiwar novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*. Nowhere do we learn that *Johnny*, touted by the Communists during the years of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and serialized in their newspaper, was withdrawn from circulation by Trumbo when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. Literally overnight, the Communist party's peace campaign ended and was replaced by calls for intervention against Hitler.

Accordingly, Trumbo censored his own book, took the plates from the publisher, and let it go out of print. But the novel, which had gotten good reviews, was still popular, and readers wrote to Trumbo to find out where it could be found. Not satisfied that his book was no longer available, Trumbo—fearing, undoubtedly correctly, that many of those letter-writers were isolationists, and some even pro-fascist—invited the FBI to visit him at home in 1944, and turned the letters over to the agents. He informed on Americans who only wanted to read his own novel! It was the right wing, he explained, that was trying to make censorship of *Johnny Got His Gun* into "a civil liberties issue," so he had no compunction about informing on these people. After all, he told the agents, some of them were "organizing politically" and others had called Franklin Roosevelt a "criminal incendiary."

Trumbo also bragged about his role in keeping anti-Communist films from being made. He had defended Stalin as "one of the democratic leaders of the world," and was proud to have helped keep Hollywood from filming Trotsky's "so-called" biography of Stalin, as well as books by James T. Farrell, Victor Kravchenko, and Arthur Koestler—all of which he called "untrue" and "reactionary." In 1954 he wrote a fellow blacklisted writer of the Communist party's "fine tradition . . . that whenever a book or play or film is produced which is harmful to the best interests of the working class, that work and its author should and must be attacked in the sharpest possible terms."

And so he did.

Yet in 1956, when many Communists were shocked by Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin, Trumbo explained that his own library contained books he had read by Arthur Koestler, George Orwell, James Burnham, Eugene Lyons, Isaac Don Levine, and other anti-Communist writers.

Dalton Trumbo—much more complicated and nuanced than this film that claims to honor him—condemned the Communist party for exploiting the Ten 'for every left-wing cause that came down the pike.' They had become adornments for the Communist party: 'noble losers.'

"I was not surprised" by Khrushchev's revelations, he said. And yet somehow, Peter Askin and Christopher Trumbo felt that this revelation was not worth including. Perhaps it would have interfered with their hagiographic treatment of Trumbo since it showed that, while he regularly denounced anti-Communists and defended Stalin in public, he took a secret pride in knowing the real truth about the Communist reality.

Also missing is the fact that Trumbo did not consider himself, or the others who comprised the Hollywood Ten, heroic. They did not seek to "perform historic deeds," he wrote to screenwriter Albert Maltz; they appeared before HUAC unwillingly and took the advice of Communist lawyers to make their appearance a circus. All they sought was "to save [themselves] from punishment."

Some wondered later in the decade: Why did they not get work? It was not because they were Reds, Trumbo believed, but because many of his comrades were "mediocrities" who failed to show "competence, ability [and] craftsmanship."

As for the blacklist, Trumbo came to believe that it was not the fault of either cowardly studio bosses or the members of HUAC. It was as much their own fault, he concluded, because the Ten had belonged to a secret Leninist organization. "The question of a secret Communist Party," he wrote in an unpublished 1958 article, "lies at the very heart of the Hollywood blacklist," and it was that feature that caused most Americans to assume the Reds had something to hide. They were not living in Stalin's Soviet Union, Trumbo told his former comrades, but in democratic America, where it was possible to work for change openly in the political marketplace. In Hollywood, he and the others "should have all been open Communists, or . . . not have been members at all." Secrecy meant that they, as well as those who informed against them, had "no realistic moment of choice."

Dalton Trumbo, far more complicated and nuanced than this film which claims to honor him, condemned the Communist party for exploiting the Ten "for every left-wing cause that came down the pike." They had become adornments for the Communist party: "noble losers."

Of course, *Trumbo: The Movie* will have none of this, for it would have to acknowledge that, for much of his life in Hollywood, Trumbo *was* an active Communist who followed every twist and turn of the party line. It would have to be candid about his later doubts and disillusionment, and show that he was anything but a martyr for the First Amendment. It would have to show that Trumbo had come to feel that many of the "informers" had left the Communist party "to avoid constant attempts to meddle with the ideological content" of their writing. Therefore, as he put it, "I have no intent of fanning the embers of justifiable hatred which burned so brightly twenty-five years ago."

Fifty years later, Trumbo's son and Peter Askin want to do just that. ♦

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Ideas in Battle

A publisher's reflection.

BY ROGER KIMBALL

At a June 4 meeting in Washington to observe the tenth anniversary of Encounter Books, sponsored by the Hudson Institute's Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal, Roger Kimball, editor of The New Criterion *and publisher of Encounter Books, offered some introductory remarks, "Encounter and the Power of Ideas."*

The work of the Spanish-born American philosopher George Santayana is not as well known today as it should be. But nearly everyone knows Santayana's observation that "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." As the publisher of Encounter Books, a press concerned with ideas and public policy, I often think of Santayana's admonition. It always inspires a certain fear and trembling, especially when I remember it in conjunction with that old Chinese curse: "May you live in interesting times."

We certainly live in interesting times. It is an age in which "faster" is synonymous with "better," when yesterday seems like ancient history, and when empty hortatory words like "change," "audacity," and "innovation" are widely regarded as beneficent talismans of universal future happiness—a happiness that never actually arrives but which, so we are told, is always just around the corner.

At such a time, simply remembering where we have been as a culture is of paramount importance. And it is worth pausing to note that a crucial part of remembering is facing up to reality, which means having the courage to call things by their real names. One of the most corrosive legacies of political correctness is the culture of intellectual and moral euphemism that results. It is part of Encounter's mission to resuscitate those essential cultural memory markers and speak frankly about the constellation of ideas that lead, and mislead, contemporary public life.

Kimball

Who are we, we Americans of the 21st century? How did we arrive at our present prosperity? What sacrifices were made by our forbears to bequeath us the richest, freest, most physically secure society in history? What good ideas did the Founders of this republic promulgate to our eventual benefit? Equally important, what bad ideas did they shackle, tame, and inoculate us against? It is worth stressing the bad ideas. Santayana's observation about the dangers of forgetting the past is fearsome not only because of the good things we might miss, should forgetting progress and metastasize; it is fearsome also because of the many bad things that we thought we had vanquished only to see them striding buoyantly over the horizon once more.

More than two decades ago, Daniel Patrick Moynihan ruefully noted that Republicans had become "the party of ideas." Although it is not universally acknowledged, especially in Washington, Moynihan was right about that, as recent American political history amply attests on issues from welfare and taxes to free markets and national security. And this fact tempts me to indulge in an extended parenthesis. Recently the *New Yorker* ran a long piece by George Packer about the alleged bankruptcy of conservative ideas. The newsstand edition even featured a headline wondering whether the GOP was "brain dead," a question which prompted me to ask "compared to whom?"

Packer's article was unsatisfactory in ways large and small. Where, one wonders, was the *New Yorker*'s vaunted fact-checking department? Why had they not scrupled to verify the many misquotations and mischaracterizations that bedizen the piece? Packer seemed to mistake intellectual sobriety with intellectual weakness. Compared with the situation a few decades ago, conservative ideas enjoy enormous influence in our society nearly everywhere that doesn't begin with the words "University of . . ." On economic matters, for example, it is widely understood that low taxes and free markets conduce to the production of wealth, and that what Friedrich Hayek called "the extended order of cooperation," *aka* capitalism, is enormously more successful at ensuring prosperity and underwriting liberty than any of the sentimental, socialistic alternatives on offer.

It is part of the responsible exercise of intelligence to recognize the difference between ideas that work and produce desirable outcomes, and those which merely produce a species of moral intoxication. Packer points to no left-liberal ideas that can compete with conservative ideas; he merely assumes that because conservatives are not beating a gong called "change" they have run out of ideas. The truth is that conservative ideas are regnant, and those who support them understand the wisdom of Lord Falkland's observation that "When it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change."

There is much more that might be

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said about Packer's article. I'll confine myself here to noting his description of the *New Criterion* as a "dour" publication, a characterization which suggests that Packer either doesn't know what the word "dour" means, that he has never read the *New Criterion*, or that he was engaged in this article primarily in a species of ideological combat masquerading as journalism. These options, I should note, are not mutually exclusive.

But let me return to Pat Moynihan. I wonder what he would say were he with us today. It was the philosopher Samuel Goldwyn, I believe, who spoke of feeling as if it were "*déjà vu* all over again." I know what he means. Ideas that have been tried and found wanting; tried and found to be disastrous: the totalitarian temptation in all its many guises; the multifarious utopian schemes for universal beatitude; efforts to curtail freedom in the name of an abstract republic of virtue—all these ideas were thoroughly discredited only yesterday but, like some strange villain out of a science fiction movie, they have suddenly changed shape and are poised to attack again. We have yet to learn—even now, even at this late date—that promises of liberation often turn out to conceal new enchantments and novel forms of bondage.

Consider, to take just one issue that Encounter has weighed in on often, the various efforts to deconstruct American identity and replace it with a multicultural "rainbow" or supranational bureaucracy. Such efforts have made astonishing inroads in the last few decades and, especially, in the last several years. As the political philosopher Samuel Huntington has noted, the attack on American identity has counterparts elsewhere in the West wherever the doctrine of multiculturalism has trumped the cause of national identity. The European Union—whose unelected leaders are as dedicated to multicultural shibboleths as they are to rule by top-down, antidemocratic bureaucracy—is a case in point. But the United States, the most powerful national state, is also the most attractive target for deconstruction.

It is a curious, not to say alarming, development. It corroborates James Burnham's observation that "liberalism permits Western civilization to be reconciled to dissolution." For what we have witnessed with the triumph of multiculturalism is a kind of hypertrophy or perversion of liberalism, as its core doctrines are pursued to the point of caricature. As the Australian philosopher David Stove pointed out, we in the West "set ourselves to achieve a society which would be maximally tolerant. But that resolve not only gives maximum scope to the activities of those who have set themselves to achieve the maximally-intolerant society; it also, and more importantly, paralyzes our powers of resistance to them."

September 11 precipitated a crisis the end of which we cannot see. Part of the task that faces us now is to acknowledge the depth of barbarism that challenges the survival of culture. And part of that acknowledgment lies in reaffirming the core values that are under attack.

Freedom, diversity, equality, tolerance, even democracy—how many definitive liberal virtues have been redacted into their opposites by the imperatives of political correctness? If a commitment to "diversity" mandates bilingual education, then we must institute bilingual education, even if it results in the cultural disenfranchisement of those it was meant to benefit. The passion for equality demands "affirmative action," even though the process of affirmative action depends upon treating people unequally.

Since September 11, these issues have taken on a new urgency. The murderous fanatics who destroyed the World Trade Center, smashed into the Pentagon, and killed thousands of innocent civilians, took the issue of multiculturalism out of the fetid atmosphere of the graduate seminar and into the streets. Or, rather, they dramatized the fact that multiculturalism was never a merely academic matter. In a sense, the actions of those terrorists were less an attack on the United States than part of what the former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called "a war to reverse the triumph of the West."

We are still very far from being in a position to assess the full significance of September 11 for the simple reason that the detonations that began that day continue to reverberate. A battle of wills, a contest of values, a war of ideas, was initiated—or at least openly acknowledged—on September 11. It is much too early to predict the course of that conflict.

Indeed, September 11 precipitated a crisis the end of which we cannot see. Part of the task that faces us now is to acknowledge the depth of barbarism that challenges the survival of culture. And part of that acknowledgment lies in reaffirming the core values that are under attack. That reaffirmation is another part of Encounter's mandate. Ultimately, victory in the conflict that besieges us will be determined not by smart weapons but by smart heads. That is to say, the conflict is not so much—not only—a military conflict as a conflict of world views, of ideas.

And that is where institutions like Encounter Books can play an important role. My point is that when we speak of publishing and the power of ideas, we need to give at least as much attention to criticizing seductive bad ideas as we do to promulgating the good ones. Indeed, because vital good ideas that impinge upon politics and social life tend to be elaborations of relatively simple home truths, the critical project of exposing bad ideas is often tantamount to revealing the good ideas that the bad ideas had obscured or perverted. ♦

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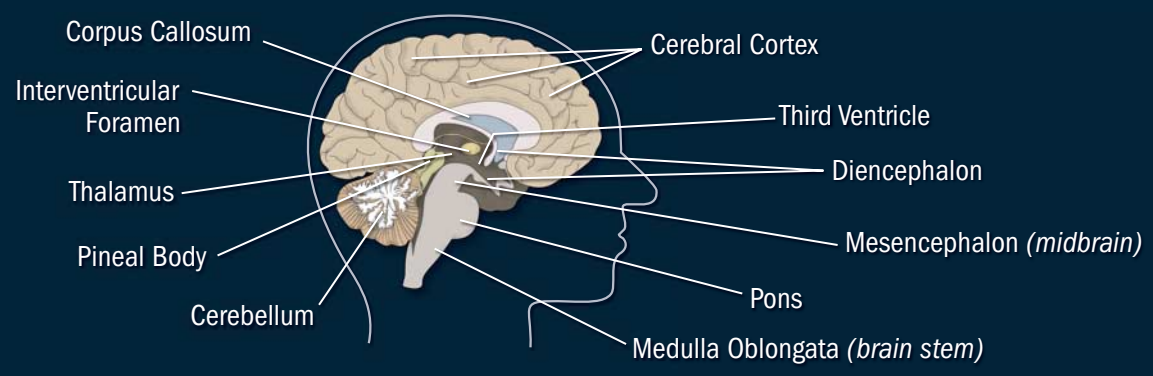
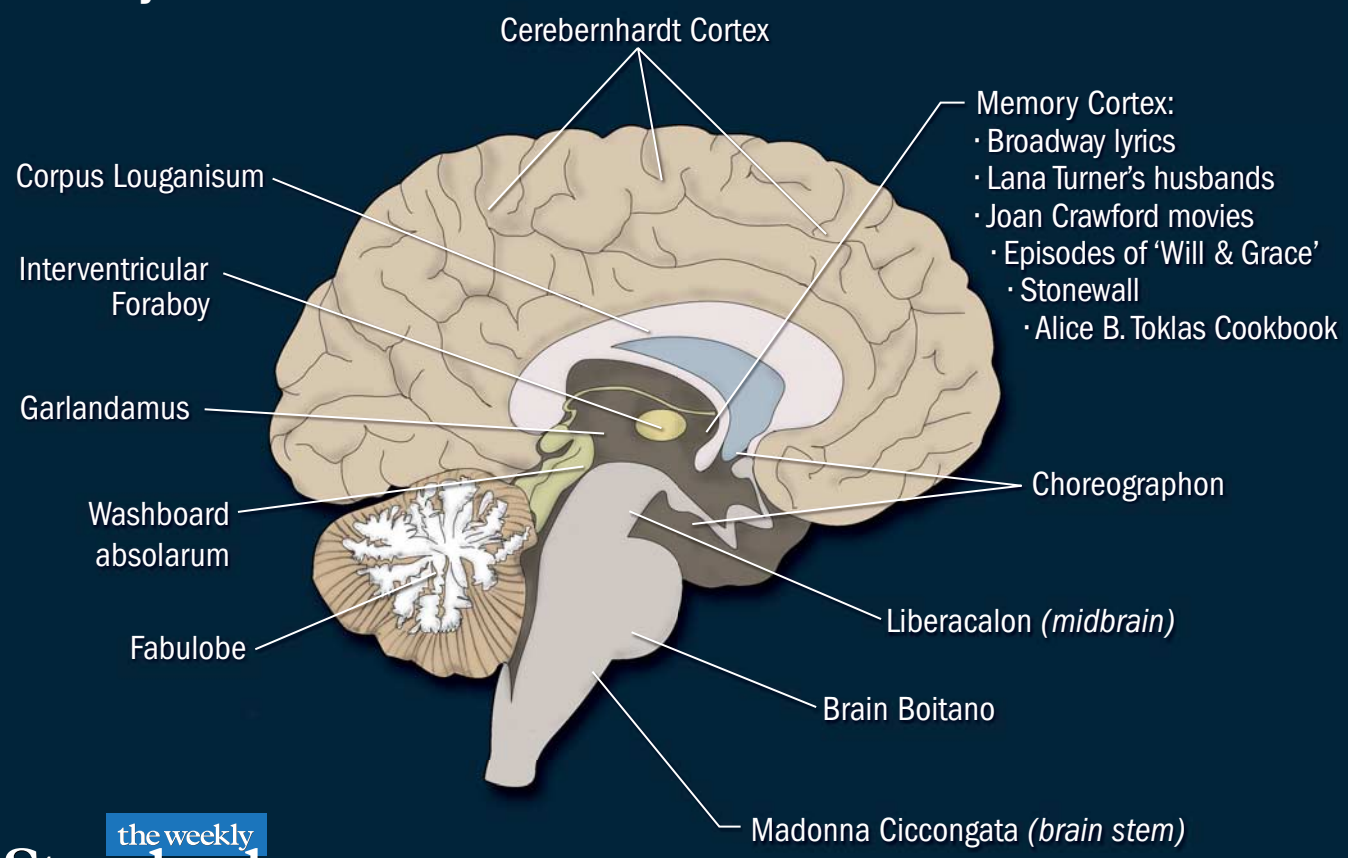
"Is there such a thing as a 'gay brain'? And, if so, are some people born with brains that make them more likely to be homosexual? . . . Those are some of the thorny questions that have been raised by a provocative new study that found striking differences between the brains of homosexuals and heterosexuals in both men and women."

—The Washington Post, *June 23, 2008*

The Heterosexual Brain



The Gay Brain



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